

AFGHANISTAN:

THE BUFFER STATE.

GREAT BRITAIN AND RUSSIA
IN CENTRAL ASIA

A COMPREHENSIVE TREATISE ON THE ENTIRE CENTRAL ASIAN
QUESTION WITH TWO MAPS SPECIALLY PREPARED
FROM THE MOST RECENT INFORMATION.

BY

CAPTAIN GERVAIS LYONS

*The 2nd Batt. Suffolk Regt., late of the Indian Army,
Interpreter in Russian.*

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

BY

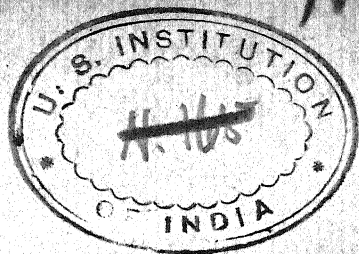
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(Published with the official sanction of the Army Council.)

MADRAS:
HIGGINBOTHAM & CO.

LONDON:
LUZAC & CO.

1910.



DEDICATED TO
LIEUTENANT-GENERAL
SIR REGINALD C. HART, K.C.B., K.C.V.O., V.C.,
THE AUTHOR'S FIRST GENERAL,
AS A MARK OF ESTEEM AND AFFECTION.

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PREFACE.

CAPTAIN LYONS having asked me to write a preface to his book on the Central Asian Question, I have much pleasure in stating that he has particular qualifications for writing on this difficult and complex subject, and he has produced a work that is both interesting and instructive.

India is the weak point in our Imperial armour, but since the Russo-Japanese War there has been less interest evinced in the affairs of the Middle East; however, the old troubles are sure to crop up again.

I am very generally in agreement with the views of the author, but no two men are likely to agree on every point. However, Captain Lyons puts his case very fairly, and never hesitates to quote authorities who do not support his arguments.

There can be no doubt that it is very desirable that a book on the Central Asian Question should appear from time to time, so as to bring the subject up-to-date. The extension of railways, changes in the political situation and many other circumstances are continually modifying the conditions upon which we base our opinions regarding the military situation so far as it concerns our interests in India.

We should do what we can to avoid war in Central Asia, if only from the fact that it would cause great unrest in Afghanistan and India, and

such a war would put a great strain on our resources without offering any compensating advantages.

We may be sure that Russia will expand along the line of least resistance.

Captain Lyons might have mentioned the atrocious climate of the Persian Gulf, and that no good harbour exists. Further, India would be of no value to Russia without command of the sea, therefore, we may well agree with the author that Russia never seriously contemplates its conquest, but, she is well aware of her capacity, when it suits her purpose, to foment serious trouble. Consequently, her nearer approach to our frontier must always be a matter for serious consideration.

If there is any treaty engagement to protect the Ameer from external attack, there must be some special provision regarding Afghan-Turkestan which is on the far side of the Hindu Kush.

The railway from Quetta to Nushki strengthened our strategical position, but its extension to Seistan would, under existing conditions, weaken it.

One of the principal causes of distress and trouble in India is the early and improvident marriages resulting in the population increasing much faster than the subsistence.

There are many reasons why there must be unrest and a great upheaval in India, and we have

to face an extremely serious, complicated and difficult situation, and if it was for that reason alone, I should always be against any reduction of our regular army, and in favour of service in India being maintained sufficiently attractive to induce our best men to do their life's work in the Civil or Military service of that country. It is extremely dangerous to blunder where the interests of three hundred millions of people are concerned, even when they are of different races and religions.

REGD. C. HART.



INTRODUCTION.

[N the consideration of every great question and more especially such a complex and abstruse problem as the Central Asian Question, of which India is now universally acknowledged to be the leading factor, it is most emphatically necessary to "Hear Both Sides".

By the above I infer the concentration of one's attention, with the utmost energy of an unbiassed mind, on the points of view of both sides as regards the question under consideration, sifting all tangible arguments for and against the particular and peculiar policies of the countries concerned and finally deducing the reasons for the adoption of such political motives.

The Central Asian Question has formed for me an interesting topic of study for the past few years of my service in the Indian Army, and, when residing in Russia in 1905-1906 for the study of the language, I made a point of examining the question from the Russian point of view, particularly of course so far as it affected an invasion of India.

I travelled all over Russia's great country and, speaking Russian fluently,* was lucky enough to have opportunities given to me of conversing with many distinguished Russians, soldiers and civilians, and listening to their views on Central Asian matters.

* Interpreter, Civil Service Commission, London, Oct. 1906. with record marks (96%).

On returning to India early in 1907, I gave a couple of military lectures on the subject of "An Invasion of India from a Russian point of view," and wrote a few articles. I was afterwards approached, by many of my brother officers and friends, with a request that I should write a book, briefly dealing with the whole subject. The result has been the book I now venture to present to the public. In it I have endeavoured to group together all the different branches of the whole Central Asian Question and to treat the subject *en masse* so as to enable the British reading public to gain a general, comprehensive and complete knowledge of this most interesting problem without having to refer to numerous works of reference.

Many great books have been written in the past on different branches of this huge question such as : Curzon's *Persia and the Persian Question*, Boulger's *England and Russia in Central Asia*, etc.* But people who are not enthusiasts on the subject do not care to study several long standard works in order to obtain a certain amount of accurate and precise knowledge, and it is for this reason that I have undertaken the production of a book which I humbly consider constitutes a *multum in parvo* of accurate and interesting information. In it efforts have been made to put into the proverbial nutshell the whole pith of this most important question which holds such a high place in the ranks of International Politics.

* Professor Vambery's new book on India, Franke's *History of Western Tibet*, Dr. Riquire's *La rivalité anglo-russe au 19 ième siècle en Asie*, etc. etc.

I have provided the book with two maps fully illustrating the subject and showing all frontiers and existing and projected railways. It is my earnest hope that, besides being of interest to the general reader, the book may be of great use to my brother-officers, especially to those preparing for the Staff College Admission Examination, as dealing with a subject it has hitherto been very difficult to get up in a limited time.

As far as I am aware, this subject has never been so treated before, and I claim that the perusal of these few pages will give my readers a more comprehensive and concise knowledge of the whole *status quo* in Central Asia than the reading of many books involving a very considerable outlay of time.

The most eminent Russian, French, German, British and other authorities have been consulted and every endeavour has been made to obtain the latest and most accurate information and statistics.

My best thanks are due to my friend Mr. J. C. Adam, Barrister-at-law, Madras, for having kindly seen the book through the press during my absence on duty in West Africa.

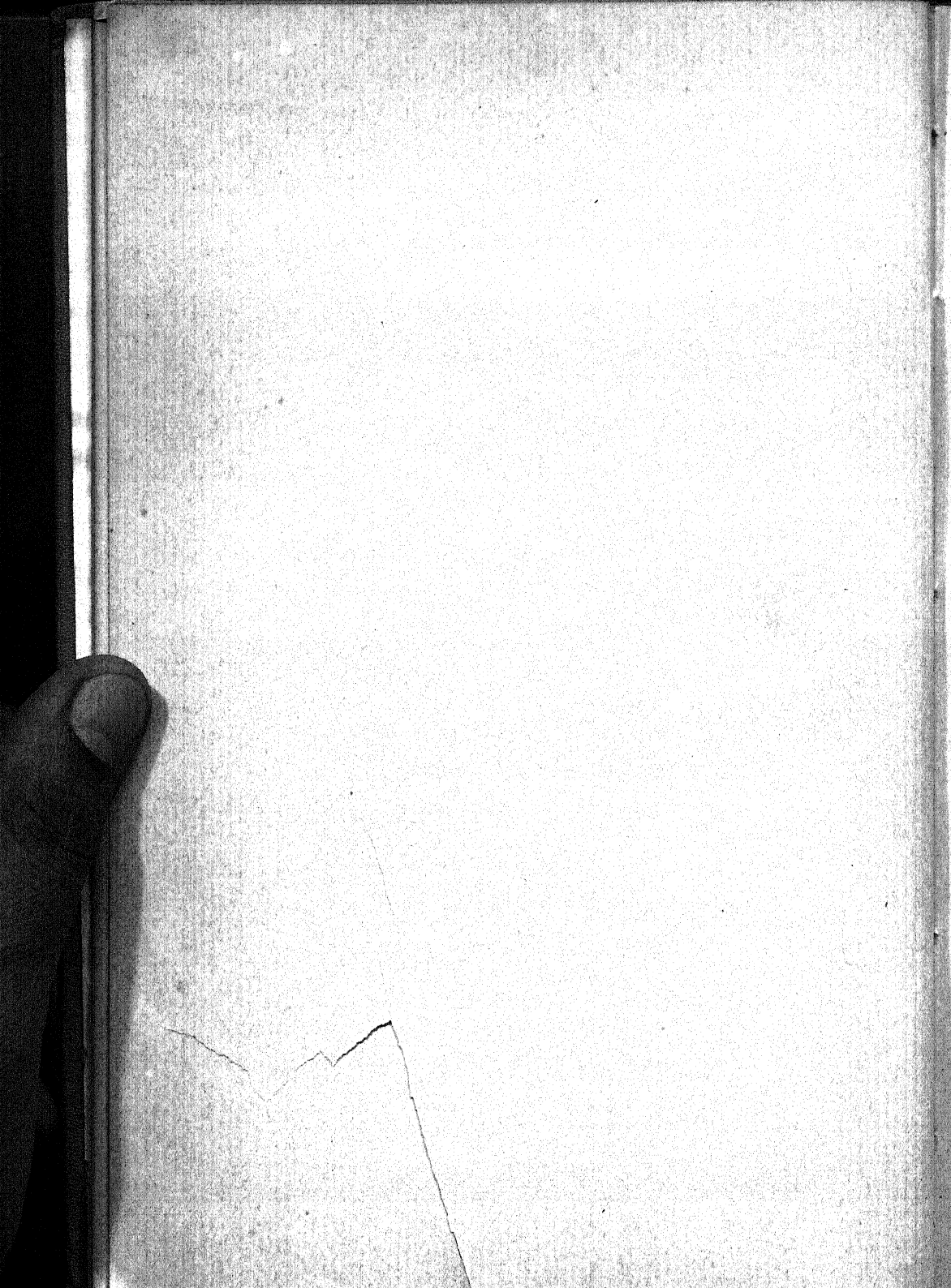
If the author succeeds, by the publishing of this book, in lessening the labours of a few of the more studious of his brother-officers and drawing the attention of the British public to the real state of affairs in Central Asia, he will consider his efforts very amply rewarded.

GROSVENOR CLUB,
PICCADILLY,
LONDON, W.

GERVAIS LYONS,
Captain, The Suffolk Regt.
(late Indian Army).

CHAPTER I

The Importance of India.



CHAPTER I

The Importance of India.

THE Central Asian Question is a very complex one and one that, in the opinion of Lord Curzon, an interested person can never tire of studying.

Boulger, after the Anglo-Afghan War of 1878-79, in referring to the Central Asian Question in his famous book *England and Russia in Central Asia*, said: "The question is what is to be the destiny of Russia and Great Britain in Central Asia, and its solution may be looked for in the determination of Russia's intentions with regard to Persia, China and India." The question, so far as Great Britain is concerned, has always been, and will always remain, a question of guarding India, and concerns itself with two undertakings:

- (1) The safeguarding of all lines of communication connecting India with the Mother Country.
- (2) The more direct safeguarding of India itself.

To ensure the above, Great Britain must so direct her policy that Persia, Afghanistan, and Western China, shall remain independent and undivided, and, if possible, more prone to British influence than that of any other power. She must also endeavour

to ensure that the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles shall be always closed to Russia. In addition to the above, Russia must never be allowed to obtain a port in the Persian Gulf, and the fact of her obtaining or negotiating to obtain the same must be regarded by Great Britain as a *casus belli*.

The question, in so far as it concerns Russia, resolves itself into a determination to penetrate to the open sea. Her expansion towards the open sea was a necessity to her well-being as her own territory had too much sameness about it, and lacked seaboard, and, added to this, her frontiers were impossible ones. In the past several attempts were made by Russia to obtain access to the Mediterranean by the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles which were frustrated by the European Powers, amongst whom Great Britain, in her anxiety to safeguard her lines of communication with India, was the prime mover.

Turkey then disappeared from the arena, as far as Russia's political aims were concerned, and expansion was continued across Manchuria to Vladivostock and from Harbin southwards to the waters of the Yellow Sea. Her Manchurian ambitions were temporarily crushed by the recent Russo-Japanese War, and it now remains open to discussion as to whether Russia will again hazard expansion in one of the above formerly-tried directions, will concentrate all her energies on expansion across Persia to gain access to the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean or will press forward across Afghanistan against India.

The latter two political aims may be most naturally classed in one and the same category, as it is scarcely conceivable that the prosecution of one of them would not lead to that of the other unless a gross error in international policy were committed by one or other of the Great Powers concerned—Russia and Great Britain. India has, in recent years, come to be considered by Russia the leading factor in the Central Asian Question, the pivot around which all the other adjacent countries revolve (Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Persia, and Kashgaria or Chinese Turkestan), each and all deriving their importance from their nearness to this important possession of ours. Professor Snessarev, President of the Central Asian Department of the Society of Oriental Research in Russia and a member of the Russian General Staff, referring to Great Britain's anxiety to safeguard her communications by sea to India, says, in his recent book, *India*,* "The Egyptian expedition had already shown the particular importance of guarding the sea communications; since that time, anxiety about the same has played a considerable part in the policy of the British as regards the Eastern Question, especially during historical moments.

"Taking into account measures directed against Russia alone, in order to safeguard these communications, we have the creation of the Crimean War, the burning of our fleet and the closing of the Straits for us."

* St. Petersburg, 1906. recently translated by me.

The fact that India has now practically become the centre of gravity of the Central Asian Question is easily explained. On the completion of the Suez Canal in 1869, England's line of communication with India became homogeneous (i. e., a water-way) and more vulnerable by the Russian Black Sea fleet, for which reason England sided with Turkey in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 so as to safeguard her interests. As a result, Russia did not succeed in obtaining a passage to the Mediterranean Sea, the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles being again, as after the Crimean War, closed to her, thus shutting up her fleet in the Black Sea. After the Russo-Turkish War, a strengthening of German influence in Turkey took place, and England then transferred the centre of gravity to the East.

The projects of Napoleon and the mission sent by him to Persia in 1807, had caused the British to recognize the predominance of Persia in the Eastern Question. By the Treaty of the 12th March, 1809, England renewed her influence (shattered after the conclusion by Napoleon of a Treaty with Persia on the 4th May, 1807) and successfully opposed the Russians and the French for close on 30 years.

Finally, towards the end of the Thirties (First Afghan War, 1839), coming to the conclusion that the advantages of Russia's geographical contact deprived her of a chance of obtaining entire predominance in Persia, England turned her attention

specially to Afghanistan, making Persia only an object of commercial rivalry. Thus the centre of gravity of the Central Asian Question has become, to all intents and purposes, India. I shall later refer to the revival of the importance of Southern and Eastern Persia in the shape of the Seistan Question.

The influential bearing of India on international policy described above alone constitutes for her an overbearing importance in the scale of destiny, giving rise to her being dubbed by Russian experts and others "The Key to the Entire World's Policy." But her material and strategic importance combined with her enormous population of 300,000,000 souls, one-fifth of the total population of the entire world's surface, inspire all rational students of the Central Asian Question with awe at their magnitude.

India is regarded by all leading men and experts in Central Asian affairs in Russia as the Achilles heel of Great Britain's might and the pledge of her fame. Lord Curzon, late Viceroy of India, once said: "India is so valuable to Great Britain that there is not a single British family which would not send out its last son to defend it, did the necessity arise."

It may be deemed immaterial and of very small account that certain British subjects, not recognizing the extreme importance of India to the mother-country, have, from time to time, in their speeches and writings, designated her as a bugbear

and drain on the country's resources and ever expressed surprise that Great Britain has persisted in holding on to India instead of "deserting this profitless country and leaving it to its fate."

India is by far the most valuable possession administered by Great Britain, not only on account of its great natural wealth and huge population, but also on account of the vast field of investments for British capital and of employment there for Britain's sons in the military and administrative departments of Government, thus providing lucrative billets to her ambitious youth and relieving the pressure on the mother-country. India is also an enormous trade centre and an important sea-junction, a great concentration camp for troops and an admirable replenishing terminus for ordnance, commissariat and other expeditionary stores.

Finally, she constitutes a great naval auxiliary base, whence expeditions to Egypt, East Africa, South Africa and throughout the Eastern theatre generally, can easily be planned; and, indeed, had Great Britain not possessed India, many of her past expeditions would have either been unfeasible or beset by enormous difficulties, rendering their successful termination a matter of dubious conjecture.

Although Free Trade is in vogue in India, England, as ruler, has the lion's share of the imports and exports—the fact of the trade predominance remaining with the rulers is very noticeable amongst all Eastern races.

In 1897 the total imports amounted to about sixty millions sterling, of which Great Britain's share was almost sixty per cent; the next largest importers being Germany and Belgium with about three per cent. each.* In 1900 Great Britain's share amounted to sixty-six per cent.†

In that same year the total exports amounted to about eighty millions sterling, of which about thirty per cent. went to Great Britain, about thirteen per cent. to China (principally opium), seven per cent. to Germany and six per cent. to France.

The main exports from India to England are raw products, such as cotton and jute, which frequently return to the country in the shape of English fabric.

As regards the carrying trade, out of the 5000 ships (3,900,000 tons) engaged in the export trade, entering Indian ports in 1897, English ships possessed a tonnage of 3,100,000 (about eighty per cent.). The value of the sea-trade has increased 1400 per cent. during the last sixty years.

India has an extensive sea-board, her most important harbours being Calcutta, Bombay, Rangoon, Karachi and Madras. These five leading harbours receive about ninety-five per cent. of the imports and dispatch about ninety per cent. of the exports.

* The figures of Imports and Exports from 1900 to 1908 are, in Rupees :
 1900-1901. Imports, Rs. 105,47,13,514 : Exports, Rs. 121,94,59,603.
 1905-1906. „ „ 143,76,47,552 : „ „ 177,30,56,270.
 1907-1908. „ „ 177,30,56,270 : „ „ 182,72,92,925.

† Federov's *Rivalry of Commercial Interests in the East*, St. Petersburg, 1903.

Calcutta, the capital of India, is on the left bank of the Hoogly river, eighty miles from the sea, and is the great seat of trade and commerce. From Karachi there is a large export trade in wheat from the Punjab and the North-west of India, over 1,000,000 tons being shipped annually.

About eighty per cent. of the Indian population pursue agriculture, from which one-fourth of the country's revenue is drawn and which takes the shape of rice, cotton, jute, indigo, opium, tea, coffee, fruit, tobacco, rubber and grain.

There are also extensive forests and the country is rich in minerals, such as carbon and its compounds—coal, petroleum, amber and graphite—gold, silver, tin, copper, zinc, lead, antimony, iron, stone, manganese, slate, lime, cement, etc. Coal is the most valuable mineral worked and the largest supporter of labour. About ninety-five per cent. of it is used in developing the industries of the country.

The Kolar Gold Fields in Mysore are most valuable.

Labour is very cheap and India is one of the best markets in the world.

Her land and water communications (both sea and river) are extremely good, her railway system being one of the most complete and efficient in the world. Her telegraphic communications are excellent and she is well supplied with transport in camels (Baluchi and Bikaneer animals are the best), carrying

loads from 400 to 800 lbs., donkeys, mules, horses, ponies, bullocks and yaks. Transport corps have been established and the system of registration of all available transport in the different districts of the country has been adopted.

India thus offers lucrative employment for English trade, ship-building, traffic, capital and industry, and a rich field for British intelligence. She is a great centre for trade with the neighbouring coasts, and may rightly be described as the mainstay of English Power in Asia and the Eastern Hemisphere.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the British, with the help of their trading settlements, shared the East India trade with the Portuguese, Dutch, French, Danes and Swedes. At the end of the eighteenth century the British East India Company commanded the entire trade, other Companies having sunk into insignificance. From the mouth of the Ganges, as also from the southern end of the peninsula, the Company's troops secured and extended their authority, and, although the French frequently came to the assistance of the natives of India, the English in 1818, after the conclusion of the long and expensive Mahratta Wars, could regard their suzerainty over India secured.

From that time to the year 1857 (100 years after Clive's victory at Plassey), the English succeeded in incorporating a number of vassal States into their possessions. In a bloody campaign with the Afghans (1839-42), due to Russian intrigue, they

reached Kabul and Kandahar, and in 1849 annexed the Punjab and Peshawar, as the populations of these districts had made an alliance with the Afghans. The mutiny was perhaps due, in part, to this rapid expansion and was further aggravated by the agitators playing on the religious feelings of the natives. About 20,000 Company's troops and 29,000 Imperial troops formed the whole European force used. Thus in 1858 the administration of India passed from the Company to the Crown.

Thenceforward the aim of the Government was to draw the princes and upper classes over to British interests by making them content with their lot, to respect their native religions, laws and customs and to develop the resources and culture of the land.

Since that time there has only been one serious rising (in Upper Burma in 1886 after the conquest of 1885) which was crushed by Lord Roberts with Native troops.

There has, however, arisen the so-called "Hindi movement," which has latterly been still further developing and causing a species of "Unrest," the original object of the same having been to nationalize the native element by the general improvement of education and sinking of political difference, in order to obtain social and political equality with the British and gain admittance into the highest offices of State so as to prepare the way for an Indian National Parliament. The National Congress, sanctioned in 1885, whose representatives belong to the educated classes, keeps the Government informed of

the current opinion of the masses of the people. The differences between the Mohammedans and the Hindus are so great that they fall foul of each other on all possible occasions.

There are only about 200,000 British in India whereas there are 300,000,000 natives, of which 215,000,000 are Hindus, 60,000,000 Mohammedans and 7,000,000 Buddhists, and it is to her principle "Divide and Rule," that Great Britain owes her strength. Her policy in India is similar to that of Alexander the Great and diametrically opposite to that of Russia, as the latter does not usually employ any of her Central Asian subjects in her fighting line.

The whole of India, with the exception of the Presidencies of Bombay and Madras and the Native States, is directly administered by the Viceroy in Council, under the supreme control of the Secretary of State for India. The executive Council is composed of a select body of Departmental Experts, as in Finance, Public Works, Law, etc., who are a species of Miniature Secretaries of State. The Imperial Departments, such as Posts and Telegraphs, Railways, Customs, etc., are directly under the administration of the Viceroy in Council throughout the whole of India. In the Presidencies of Bombay and Madras, all non-imperial matters are administered by the Governors in Council, under the direct control of the Secretary of State.

Residents and Agents are appointed by the Indian Government to enforce an effective control

over the affairs of the vassal States: some of these pay tribute and some maintain troops as auxiliaries—"Imperial Service Troops." Only in the case of a few States does vassalage limit itself simply to a recognition of British Suzerainty.

For the security of the North-west Frontier, Lord Curzon, when Viceroy of India in 1898-99, adopted the following principles:—

- (1) Frontier forts to be abandoned and regular troops withdrawn.
- (2) The guarding of the frontier to be carried out by militia raised amongst the frontier tribes, some of which were to be re-organized and supplied with British Officers.
- (3) Regular British and Native Troops to be united in advanced and fortified camps and kept as reserves. These camps were to be connected, by narrow gauge railways, with the railway network of the plains of India, thus increasing the "capability of approach."

With reference to the last principle, Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, on being appointed Commander-in-Chief of India in November 1902, turned his attention to the better defence of India as regards re-organization of her regular troops on more mobile and supple lines, so as to have a larger army immediately available for striking purposes and do away with small stations devoid of strategic value.

He directed attention to :

- (1) The maintenance of the internal security of the country,
- (2) Its protection from invasion,

and in 1905 divided the army into two commands :—

- (1) Northern Command, consisting of five divisions and three independent Frontier brigades.
- (2) Southern Command, consisting of four divisions and the Burma and Aden garrisons.

Divisions were of course subdivided into brigades and the establishment of senior officers was put down at three generals, six lieut.-generals, twenty-four major-generals and 110 substantive colonels (including brigadiers and so-called colonels-on-the-staff).

Militia corps were also re-organized and included two battalions of Khyber Rifles, two battalions of Kurram Militia, the Zhob Levy Corps and the Northern and Southern Waziristan Militia.

The transport had been previously organized into corps, mule corps (draught and pack), camel corps, camel cart and pony cart trains and ekka (an Indian country vehicle) trains, and Lord Kitchener at the Delhi manœuvres in 1902, immediately preceding the Delhi Coronation Durbar, was warmly congratulated by a certain German Baron attached

to his staff for the manœuvres as possessing the finest transport in the world.

The success of Lord Kitchener's great scheme, making it possible to amass on the Indian frontier, at very short notice, a striking force of about 160,000 men to campaign under the same generals and colonels that they had served under in time of peace—a very important factor—has been proved by the recent short, successful and inexpensive expedition against the Zakka Khels under Sir James Willcocks.

As regards the number of troops at the disposal of Great Britain in India I give the following estimate :—

- (1) British troops stationed in India, varying from 75,000 to 68,000 men and consisting of 52 battalions of infantry, 36 squadrons of cavalry, 42 field, 11 horse and 8 mountain batteries, 23 companies of garrison artillery, 366 guns and about 12,000 horses : say, 73,000 men.
- (2) Native troops now called the Indian Army and officered, in the higher ranks, by British Officers, the company officers being all natives of India, composed of 148 battalions of infantry, 166 squadrons of cavalry with full complement of horses and about 8 native mountain batteries : say, 165,000 men.

- (3) Imperial Service Troops, cavalry and infantry : say, 20,000 men.
- (4) Reserve of the Indian Army : about 40,000 men.
- (5) Frontier Militia : about 5000 men.
- (6) Volunteers, including about 37 infantry battalions, 40 squadrons and 5 batteries : about 20,000 men.

Total : about 323,000 men.

To the above may be added about 10,000 British reservists in India and native troops of vassal princes might be taken at about 50,000 men. There are also the Governors' and Viceroy's body-guards and the Imperial Cadet Corps (a few young scions of noble birth, mostly educated at Chiefs' colleges).

Thus the total number of troops available for all purposes would be roughly about 390,000 men.

The value of Indian troops (native) has been tested, with great success, in other countries besides India, viz : China 1900 ; Somaliland 1902-1904 ; and Tibet 1904.

The number of home troops it would be possible to delegate to the defence of India in case of great emergency is difficult to state as it must depend largely on political events.

There is a regular army in Great Britain of about 200,000 men, expanding to nearly 300,000

on the mobilization of the reserves. There are, in addition, the militia which has become a part of the first line of defence under Mr. Haldane's scheme, and the Territorial Army.

The recent South African War demonstrated our ability to raise troops at very short notice and send a large army, altogether about 450,000 men, away from our shores, if absolutely necessary.

The Admiralty are always prepared, at very short notice, to dispatch the Aldershot Army Corps of 45,000 men anywhere it may be necessary.

The fleet on the Indian Coast is weak, but the strong Mediterranean fleet would bar the way to India against any other European Power, and the British fleet, having many bases in Indian waters, would be able to successfully contend against other fleets not possessing bases in those waters.

The rapid progress of Russia in Central Asia during the sixties led to an alliance between the Ameer of Afghanistan and the Indian Government.

In 1878, when Great Britain threatened Russia with war by sending a contingent of Indian troops to Malta and collecting a large fleet in the Mediterranean, the Russians replied by sending a Russian ambassador to Kabul. An English ambassador was sent back to India from the Khyber Pass and the Indian Government entered on a war with Afghanistan.

An army of 41,000 men with 144 guns was set in motion in three columns : first, from Peshawar along the Kabul Valley ; second (central), via the Kurram Valley and Shutargardan Pass (Roberts) ; third, via Quetta and Kandahar.

At the beginning of 1879 the first column reached Gandamak and the Ameer decided to make peace.

In the Treaty of Gandamak it was set forth that :

- (1) The Ameer would receive advice on his foreign policy from the British Government and, in return, would be protected against all external attacks.
- (2) The control of the frontier tribes and of the passes leading from Peshawar to the Kabul Valley would be handed over to the British Government.
- (3) The Kurram, Sibi and Pishin Valleys were to belong to British India.
- (4) A British Resident was to be appointed at Kabul under the protection of a British escort and the Ameer was to receive an annual subsidy of £120,000.

A few months after the above treaty the British Resident was murdered in Kabul and the war broke out afresh.

After the capture of Kabul and Kandahar, the war ended by the installation of Abdur Rahman as Ameer (*a persona grata* with the Indian Government) on the basis of the Treaty of Gandamak.

The Khyber Pass was then fortified and a military station set up at Quetta. It is now our policy to keep Afghanistan intact and undivided and make use of her as a great buffer State in the defence of our valuable possession, India.

The British lines of occupation on the Afghan Frontier are :—

- (1) The Khyber Pass to Lundi Kotal.
- (2) The Kurram Valley up to Kurram.
- (3) The Gomal Valley to Wana.
- (4) The Zhob Valley to Loralai.
- (5) The Bolan Line to Quetta with Harnai loop to Pishin and up to New Chaman.
- (6) Line Quetta to Nushki.

The natural defensive line of the river Indus is artificially fortified at Dera Ismail Khan, Kala Bagh and Attock.

On November 9th, 1901, the new North-West Frontier province came into existence in India. It is administered by a Chief Commissioner, and the object of its institution was to bring our external policy (the management of the border tribes) under the direct control of the Government of India. The question of forming the North-West Frontier territory into a separate province had been under discussion for the previous 20 years and originated in a conflict between what are known as the "Lawrence" and the "Forward" Policies. The Lawrence Policy, favored by Lord Roberts,

maintained that the North-West Frontier should not be crossed, but that, should Russia ever undertake an invasion of India, she should be allowed to make the tedious journey across the Eastern mountains of Afghanistan and encounter fresh Indian troops at Pishin and Peshawar, whilst her forces would be necessarily enormously weakened by having to guard her long line of communications. The Forward Policy favored seeking a line of defence such as Kandahar—Ghazni—Kabul and pushing forward troops to the Hindu Kush so as to rapidly take the offensive. For this purpose it would be necessary to be certain of Afghanistan, introduce a higher civilization into the country and lay out a close network of railways and roads.

Such projects as the prolongation of the railway from Chaman to Kandahar and the building of a railway along the Kabul river seem to point to an adoption of the Forward Policy.

In this case the best line would probably be from Peshawar and the Khyber Pass through Kabul and Kandahar to the Bolan Pass and Quetta, which would prevent an enemy seizing the passes leading into India. But, as a nation administering a large wealthy and thickly populated country like India, we have infinitely more reason to fear internal dissension and mutiny rather than invasion by Russia or any other power.

There is no doubt that the most humane system of administration is that which legislates for the

predominant class or classes of the population, and Russia's great country may be looked on as a glaring example of the deplorable condition to which a country can be brought by a bureaucratic government refusing to recognize the paramount necessity of adopting such a system. She has done very little for her terribly oppressed peasant class, although it forms 75% of her total population, and her proper action in the future as regards the land question should not only be to allay the peasants' sufferings, but ensure the permanent internal pacification of the country.

Though it is true that Great Britain has shown in the past a great superiority in diplomacy as compared with Russia, and her foresight and sagacity in Central Asian affairs deserve the highest praise, it seems to me that Russian and German statesmen recognize much more vividly than the British themselves, the extreme importance of India and the necessity of correcting certain errors of policy in the government of that country. They also vividly realize that, in the event of a great war, our first thought must be of India, our most vulnerable point.

During the many years' progress of Russia in Central Asia, England has been extending her frontiers, strengthening her garrisons, fortifying her military centres, constructing depots, influencing the wild hill tribes and improving her communications.

Lord Roberts, in his "Forty-one years in India," referring to the above, says: "England in Asia is a continental Power and hence her interests in that continent must be defended by continental means."

Great Britain can raise new troops more quickly in India than elsewhere as her native troops are very well satisfied with the pay and allowances they receive.

From India England commands the sea communications and were she forced out of India her general prestige in trade would suffer so greatly that she might never recover herself, and in India she would lose the greater part of her Asiatic market which has been for centuries one of the main sources of her wealth.

It is not therefore a matter to be wondered at that the British, recognizing to a certain extent the supreme importance to the Empire of the retention of India, are in a state, so to speak, of continuous nervous tension, are subject to a veritable nightmare of Russian invasion, giving rise to such remarks as: "If only Russia would waive her right to India;" "If only Russia would guarantee she would make no attempt on India," etc. etc.

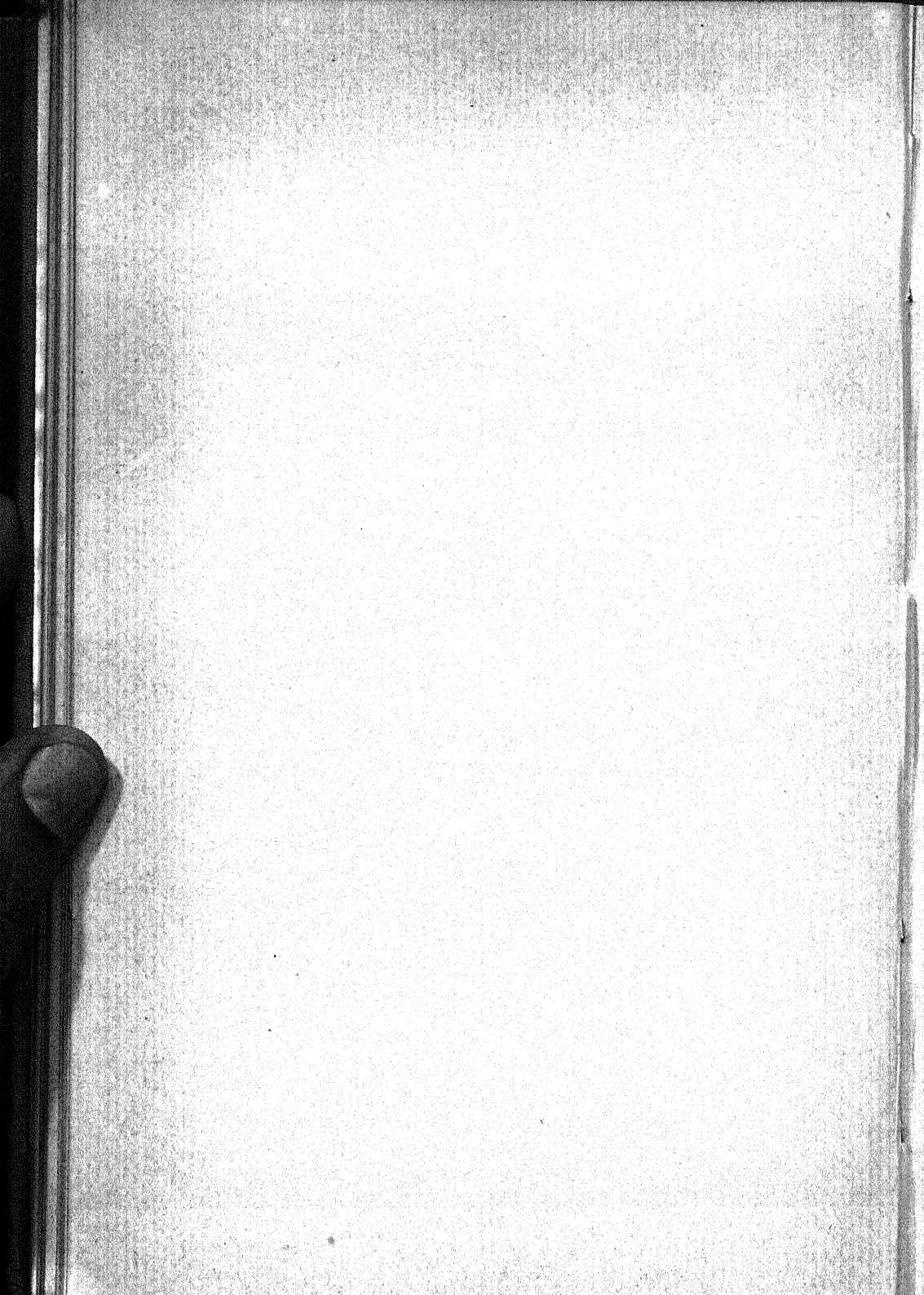
This nervous dread was shared by the late Ameer of Afghanistan (Abdul Rahman), who, in his recent autobiography, said: "All would be well if only Russia did not want to possess India, but she does."

I shall close this chapter by quoting a few lines from Professor Snessarev's recent book, *India*. (St. Petersburg, 1906.) In endeavouring to convey to his Russian readers the importance of India to the British, he makes use of the following stirring words :—

“ Rest assured that, as soon as the triumphant hour of freedom shall strike for this unfortunate unenlightened country, the next quickly succeeding chime of the clock of history will announce to the whole world the death of the Mistress of the Seas. England will then become a great world's banking establishment with its head office in London. ”

CHAPTER II

Past Invasions of India.



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[T seems to me to be opportune here to briefly recount the many different invasions of India in the past.

India's immeasurable wealth first began to attract invaders about 2000 B. C., since which time she has been subjected to about 26 invasions, 21 of which have been successful and have ended in conquest.

Traditionary legends declare that her first invader was Semiramida, Queen of Assyria, in the 22nd century B.C., and give the numbers of her army as 3,000,000 foot, 500,000 horse and 100,000 chariots. The Assyrians are said to have been put to flight by the war elephants of King Stabrobat on the Indus.

The next invader was Cyrus, the founder of the Persian Monarchy, in the year 530 B.C., i.e., some years after his conquest of Babylon. His whole army was destroyed and Cyrus himself killed.

Between 515 and 509 B.C., Darius I., son of Hystaspes, investigated the navigability of the Indus, strengthened the Persian frontier along it and annexed several of the N.-W. Frontier provinces of

India; moreover, apart from invasion, many of the early Persian kings carried on negotiations with India, and it is said that Indian troops served in the military forces of both Cyrus and Xerxes.

The next invader interests the historian much more than any of the previous ones as he was the first European who invaded and conquered India. Alexander the Great, King of Macedonia, started from Greece in 334 B. C. and first conquered Persia, then ruled by Darius III., defeating him at Granicus (334 B. C.), Issa (333 B.C.) and Arbela (331 B. C.). Darius fled towards Shahrud, whither Alexander pursued him, but was assassinated by Bessos, satrap of Bactria (Balkh) before Alexander got up to him. Alexander, to avenge Darius's death, decided to march against Bessos's capital. In order to guard against a hostile rising of the population in his rear, he brought all the districts lying on the southern slopes of the Afghan mountains under his rule by decisive blows. His victorious march led him along the Hari Rud (river) through Herat and Farah to Kandahar, whence he proceeded to Ghazni, where he wintered with his army of 20,000 foot and 3000 horse. He then commenced his march on Balkh, and Bessos, hearing of it, fled over the Oxus.

Alexander set out from the districts of Ghorband and Bamian to march over the Khawak Pass (11,600 feet high). The mountain passes still lay under deep snow, the cold was intense, and during the march his baggage and provisions had to be abandoned. He arrived in Balkh on the 15th day

and reached the Amu Daria * without meeting any resistance. The Amu Daria was bridged in 15 days and Bessos pursued, captured and executed.

Alexander then marched North-East via Samarkhand and fought against the predatory mountaineers of Ferghana at Ura-Tube where 22,000 Asiatics were killed and Alexander himself wounded. The Jaxartes (Syr Daria †) was crossed in a punitive expedition against the Scythians and, in order to secure the conquered territory, a strong fortress was erected on the site of the modern Khojend. Alexander remained two years in Bactria (Balkh) to subject the country and prepare for his campaign against India.

In the spring of 327 B.C. he moved out of Bactria, the Hindu Kush passes being then free from snow. It is impossible to state his exact route, but he crossed the mountains West of the Khawak Pass (probably by the Kaoshan Pass) and halted at Ghorband on the 10th day.

His advance was then resumed in two columns: one column under Perdiki advanced to the Indus along the southern bank of the Kabul river whilst Alexander himself marched from Jalalabad and, after fighting several engagements against the warlike mountain tribes in the valley of Kunar, arrived in the neighbourhood of Chitral. The King then moved Eastwards and, crossing some considerable ranges of mountains, reached the Indus, down which

* i.e. The lower Oxus River.

† i.e. The upper Oxus River.

broad waterway he moved his army on a fleet of boats as far as the confluence of the Kabul river where the other column had already arrived and built a bridge. During the winter of 327-326 B. C. Alexander gave his troops a rest and, crossing the Indus in the following spring (probably at Okand, 16 miles above Attock), marched South-East as far as the Jhelum river.

A mighty Rajah, Taksil, governing the country between the Jhelum and the Ganges, was fighting with another mighty Rajah, Poros, governing the Punjab and surnamed "The Prince of the Five Rivers."

The former applied to Alexander for aid and the latter marshalled his forces to meet Poros. The King had then a mixed army, composed of Macedonians, Greeks, Persians, Parthians, Balkhans, etc., for it was his policy to make the able-bodied men of the nations he conquered serve in his fighting line, totalling about 135,000 men.

Poros, advancing to meet him with a large army and 300 war elephants, was defeated by Alexander in a most sanguinary battle which took place probably on the Karri plain.

Poros was captured and Alexander then marched as far as the River Beas, via Lahore. But the King's army was discontented and tired out with endless campaigns, which fact, combined with bad news from home, compelled him to commence his return march shortly afterwards.

Alexander's army which now numbered 120,000 men, in spite of recent losses, as it had been reinforced from Europe, followed the route now marked by the railway line from Lahore to Jhelum. The King divided his forces into three columns to return to Babylon. One naval column under Niarchos went by sea along the coast, a second column under Krateros, numbering 30,000 to 40,000 men, marched through Southern Afghanistan, Seistan and Kerman, and the third column under Alexander himself marched through Baluchistan overland to Persia, keeping close to the coast.

Krateros probably marched by the Bolan Pass (Sir Thomas Holdich says the Mulla Pass) to Quetta and thence to Kandahar via the Khojak Pass.

The King crossed the district near Hyderabad (Scinde) in August 325 B.C. with about 40,000 men and pressed on towards the West, keeping about 50 miles from the coast. His march through Southern Baluchistan was a very trying one—desert country, days oppressively hot, great scarcity of water and nights bitterly cold—and his naval column was of no use to him and expected his support in the matter of supplies, etc. The great wastage in men and horses was made good when Krateros, who had further strengthened the authority of the Macedonian government in Afghanistan, marching down the Helmund river, rejoined his King at Kerman. Meanwhile Niarchos had landed on the Persian coast with his 12,000 men, and Alexander's army was thus once more united.

The great King had traversed altogether between 8,000 and 9,000 miles through the mountains and steppes of the highlands of Persia over some of the highest passes in the world and across deserts and rivers. He arrived in Babylon after nearly seven years' absence in the beginning of 323 B.C. with the remnants of his army and died shortly afterwards in his 33rd year.

After Alexander's campaigns no invasion took place until that of Nushriwan, a Persian Shah, who only crossed the Indus as far as the Doab in the 6th century and then turned his attention to China.

In 711 A. D. Mahomed Kasim, nephew of the Governor of Basra, reached Mooltan.

In the 8th century another invasion was made by Ughuz Khan who conquered Afghanistan and Kashmir and returned to Mongolia via Gilgit, Yassin, Darkot, and the Baroghil Pass(Hindu Kush). This warrior, like Alexander, first conquered Turkestan and, seizing the country between the Syr and Amu Daria rivers advanced on Kabul and Ghazni, which he conquered before advancing on Kashmir.

In 997 A.D. Mahmud, son of Sabaktagin (founder of the mighty dynasty of Ghazni Sultans in the end of the 9th century A. D.), a deep believer in the prophet Mahomet, succeeded his father and commenced his religious wars. He is credited altogether with 17 different invasions of India, of which only 12 are generally recorded in history. During the first ten years of his incessant wars he did not

penetrate further than the Punjab, but in 1011 A.D. the Mussulman marched into Delhi. Mahmud's 1018 A. D. campaign brought him to Peshawar, thence to Kashmir and on to Ladak and Tibet, after which he crossed the Himalayas and entered the Ganges valley. His last invasion of India was made in 1024 A. D., when he started from Ghazni and, crossing the Suleiman mountains by the Gomal Pass, arrived at Mooltan.

The next invader was Mahomed of Ghore, who had overthrown the might of the Ghazni Sultans. His first invasion was made in 1191 A. D. , but was unsuccessful. In 1194 he penetrated as far as Delhi and in 1195 took Benares on the river Ganges. He returned by the Gomal Pass (Suleiman Mountains).

Now commences the era of the invasions of the great Mogul conquerors.

Jenghiz Khan, also called Temuchin, Mogul Emperor, was born in the Chinese province of Ili, and, in 1204 A.D. made himself Commander-in-Chief of the numerous nomadic tribes inhabiting the country from the confines of Manchuria to the Irtish river and from Baikal to Tangut.

After his conquest of China in 1217 A. D., he moved in a westerly direction from his home in the Karakorum and, before crossing the mountains, sent an army to conquer Kashgar and Khotan. He extended his frontiers as far South as the passes through the Kuenlun Mountains (i. e. as far as the

northern limits of British India and Kashmir of today). He conducted a great campaign against Sultan Mahomed of Khiva, whose Kingdom included Persia, Afghanistan, Baluchistan, and the whole basin of the Amu Daria and Syr Daria up to the border mountains of the Chinese Empire in the East and to about the line Orenburg-Semipalatinsk in the North.

He is supposed to have had 600,000 men when he invaded the Syr Daria province of the Kingdom of Khiva. He followed the valleys of the rivers flowing from the Thian Shan Mountains to Lake Balkash and the Sea of Aral, a special force having been previously despatched to restrain the turbulent Kirghiz races from taking part in the war. Sultan Mahomed of Khiva had collected an army of about 400,000 men, most of whom were mounted, but, after an outpost action, he retreated to Northern Afghanistan, whence he could flank every hostile advance on Persia, relying on his fortresses (Otrar, 60 miles North-west of Chimkent, Benagit on the Syr Daria, Samarkhand and Bokhara) to hold out against Temuchin.

Temuchin then divided his army into four parts. He himself, together with his son Tului, besieged Bokhara with his main army. His sons Oktai and Chaghatai were to capture Otrar, and the two remaining portions of his army were to devastate the country on either bank of the Syr Daria with fire and sword.

Otrar was taken in five months and Samarkhand fell in 1220 after seven months' siege. In 1221 the offensive war was continued by Temuchin's sons and Tului was in hot pursuit of Sultan Mahomed. The Moguls reached Teheran, Kazvin and Hamadan. Jalal-ud-din, Sultan Mahomed's brave son, having concentrated an army in the mountainous district of Azarbijan in North-west Persia, Temuchin despatched a force thither.

Another army, having been sent across the Caucasus captured Derbeand, overran the Crimea and Southern Russia to the Dnesiter (1223) and returned to Central Asia round the North coast of the Caspian Sea.

Later Temuchin, hearing that Jalal-ud-din had strongly established himself in the regions south of the Hindu Kush and had proclaimed himself Sultan of Ghazni, despatched 30,000 men under Siki Kutuku against him (probably by the Khawak Pass) who were annihilated by Jalal-ud-din at Parwan.

But the Mogul Emperor then advanced with a large army from Samarkhand via the Bamian Pass, drove Jalal-ud-din out of Afganistan and forced him back to the Indus, where he defeated him in a decisive battle. Temuchin himself never crossed the Indus, though Bala and Durbai did and laid waste Lahore and Mooltan, returning to Samarkhand via Peshawar and the Bamian Pass.

Thus did Temuchin pave the way for future Mogul incursions.

His career was an extraordinary one, as he was nearly 60 years old before he had created an army capable of great deeds. His 13 years of brilliant successes from 1211 A. D. to 1224 A. D. put even Alexander's exploits in the shade. His armies had traversed nearly the whole of the continent of Asia from East to West and North to South and had in addition flooded the South-east of Europe. The Great Wall of China had been crossed, Pekin captured and the terror of the Mogul arms borne into Korea. He had, moreover, defeated the cavalry of Volknien, Kiev and Novgorod in the battle of Marinpole and his authority was just as completely recognized by the nomads on the Siberian steppes as by the Hindus in the valley of the Indus. He was the most formidable warrior of all ages and noted for his bestial ferocity. More than 5,000,000 beings are said to have perished at his hands. He reached his own country in 1225 and died in China in 1227 A. D., probably a victim to poison administered by the hand of one of the women of his harem.

Timur Lang (or Timur the Lame One) was the next invader of India. He was born in Shahr-i-sabz, South-west of Samarkhand and was the son of a tribal prince. He endeavoured to restore the empire of Temuchin, but did not succeed except as regards the Western half, as China (with the exception of Tibet) never came under his rule. From 1396 to 1405 (his death) he undertook as many as 35 campaigns, but I must here touch only briefly on his campaigns against India over the highlands of Persia.

In 1381 he crossed the Amu Daria near Kilif, took Balkh and pressed on westwards of the Murghub. From Sarakhs he advanced along the Hari Rud, which country submitted to him. He captured Khorasan, together with the towns of Nishapur and Sabzewar and, in order to secure his rear for his Westerly campaign, Timur advanced to the far South via Herat and subjected the Seistan country. The Moguls then marched up the Helmund river to Kandahar and thence, via the Khojak Pass and Quetta, to Kelat and Baluchistan.

In 1384 Timur concentrated his forces at Balkh to subdue Western Persia. After North-West Persia had acknowledged his rule, he passed the winter (1386-1387), with his army near Nakhitcheran* to advance thence by a short route into Southern Russia via the Caucasus.

In 1388 he subjected South-West Persia (independent States of the Muzzaffarides and from 1388-1391 was engaged in quelling disturbances in the trans-Oxus country, far away from Persia. His enforced absence caused the banished princes of Northern Persia to return and the old supremacy of the Muzzaffarides was re-asserted in Fars, Kurdistan and Luristan.

In 1392 Timur conducted a punitive expedition against Prince Mansur and, by the victory of Shiraz (his army being then composed of 30,000 cavalry), finally subjected the barbarous states of Western Persia.

* On map is written Nakkchivan.

In 1393 Baghdad was captured, Syria laid waste and Armenia, Kurdistan and the Caucasus re-visited.

In 1396 he acquired absolute power over Western Turkestan and occupied Samarkhand as his capital.

He was thus ready in 1398 to commence his advance on India. For this purpose his army was divided into three columns of cavalry mounted on hardy steppe horses. Timur was commanding the centre column and first conducted an expedition into Kafiristan with 10,000 troops, which resulted in Prince Mahomed Jehangir (commanding the mass of cavalry which marched from Guazni over the Suleiman Mountains and occupied Mooltan after a six months' siege) reaching Mooltan before Timur had left Samarkhand.

On the conclusion of the Kafiristan expedition, Timur's column started for the Indus and crossed the Suleimans by the Peiwar Pass.

The third mass of cavalry under Sultan Mahomed Khan and Prince Rustan marched out from Kabul and, crossing the Suleimans by the Khyber Pass and the Indus at Attock, occupied Lahore.

Timur crossed the Indus at Mianwali and, in October 1398, joining his two flank armies at Dera Ismail Khan on the right bank of the Indus, he left the Beas in November to march on Delhi (the then capital of India) via Panipat (North of Delhi). Mahmud, the Indian Sultan of Delhi, was defeated on the

3rd of June 1399, Delhi was captured and looted and the inhabitants put to the sword. Meerut and other cities shared the same fate.

But news of the invasion by the Turkish Sultan of Timur's possessions compelled the latter to cut short his campaign and, on the 23rd April, 1400, he arrived in Samarkhand, (via Lahore, Bannu and Kabul) loaded with inestimable treasures. He then carried out his invasion of Asia Minor, defeating the Turks in many desperate battles.

An estimate may be formed of the numbers of Timur's troops, during his engagement with Mahmud of Delhi, by the fact that he was bringing along with him 100,000 prisoners, who were all put to death, to save guards and rations, before his contact with Mahmud. Mahmud's army was composed of 10,000 horse, 50,000 foot and numerous war elephants.

Timur's troops were merely gangs of lawless bandits who clung to him, from first to last, for the sake of fresh plunder and kept him engaged in incessant warfare.

Baber I (The Lion), who also had the designation of Sultan Zahr-ud-din, founder of the Baber Dynasty, was the next invader and conqueror of India. The history of his campaigns in Central Asia and India has been accurately preserved and he himself wrote a comprehensive and most readable account of his ceaseless wars.

After the dismemberment of the Great Mogul Empire on the death of Timur, a Timurite Dynasty

was established in the fertile province of Ferghana until Baber, their ruler, was driven out of his paternal inheritance by the Usbegs. Baber retreated to the inaccessible mountains of Afghanistan with a few adherents.

In 1505 A.D. he took Kabul with 2,000 warriors, and, making it his capital, advanced thence, in the beginning of May, through the valley of the Kabul River by the Khyber Pass and Peshawar, against Bannu and Kohat and then marched along the Indus as far as Dera Ghazi Khan.

He then wheeled westwards and marched directly across the Suleimans via Ghazni back to Kabul. In 1506, Baber marched via the Bamian from Kabul to the Marghub river and thence to Herat. In 1507, he took Kafirstan and in 1511 he crossed the Khawak Pass and started driving out the Usbegs from Western Turkestan. He captured Bokhara and Samarkhand, but later suffered a severe defeat at Gish-Diwan in 1514. From this time he gave up all hope of winning back his paternal inheritance and turned his thoughts towards India.

In 1520, Baber conquered the Punjab, but had to return to Kabul and thence lead his army to Kandahar, which resisted his siege for three years and it was only after the capitulation of the Kandahar garrison that he was able to resume the offensive against India.

In 1524, Baber advanced by the Khyber Pass and Peshawar, took Lahore, sacked it and, penetrat-

ing beyond the Sutlej to Sirhind, established his supremacy in the Punjab.

He then moved along the Himalayas to Sialkote and, crossing the Jumna at a ford near Sirsare, arrived at Panipat, 18 miles from Delhi; but it was only in 1526 (April) that he finally destroyed Afghan rule in India by defeating Ibrahim II's army of 100,000 with 1,000 war elephants at Panipat.

Baber's artillery won him the day, and Delhi and Agra, together with untold treasures (including the famous Koh-i-nor diamond, which is now in the Tower of London, and is the most valuable jewel of the British Crown)*, fell into his hands.

In the following year, Baber established his capital, as Great Mogul in India, at Delhi and conquered the whole of the further part of Northern India. In 1529, he conquered Bengal and, at the end of that year, all India acknowledged Baber the Great Mogul, and his kingdom extended from the Amu Daria to Bengal. He died in 1530.

Nadir Shah was the last great invader and conqueror of India. He was born in 1688 at Kalat in the Khorassan province, his father being the local ruler appointed by the Shah. Nadir's father dying whilst his son was a minor, the latter was driven out of house and home by his avaricious relations. Entering the service of the Beg of Khorassan, he speedily distinguished himself, when in command of a few hundred cavalry, by his bold expeditions

* The recently bestowed Cullinan diamond is much larger and more valuable, though without such an interesting history.

against the Turcomans, who repeatedly crossed the Persian Frontier to rob and plunder. He was bastinadoed for impertinence to the Beg and fled to the desert, where a gang of some 2,000 bandits (most of them being his old subordinates) rallied around him.

He took up highway robbery and, in 1726, was leader of a large band of robbers. His name soon became a terror from Bokhara to India and, later on, he advanced on Kalat and, having conquered and put to death his uncle, took possession of his paternal inheritance.

At that time the outlook in Persia was very gloomy, as Turkish armies had poured into the west of the country and annexed a considerable amount of territory. Moreover the Russians had advanced southwards from the Caucasus and had possessed themselves of the Persian Province of Gilan on the South-west coast of the Caspian Sea, while, from the East, the Afghan Beg of Kandahar was marching on Shiraz, breaking down the resistance of the Persians on all sides.

Shah Takhmasp II was no military hero, so he summoned the aid of the robber chief Nadir. Some say Nadir himself offered to free Persia from the Afghan yoke. Whichever view may be right, Nadir arrived at the Shah's Court with several thousand well-armed horsemen and was appointed Commander-in-Chief.

He assembled an army of from 15,000 to 20,000 men and advanced against the Turks in 1728 and,

after defeating them in several engagements, secured the cessation of hostilities, the Turks agreeing to give up their claim to a portion of the previously conquered territory.

Nadir then marched via Teheran on Meshed, the Governor of which town had allied himself with the Afghans against the Shah. His army totalled about 40,000 men, the greater part of whom were Persians attracted by the splendour of his exploits. Meshed was captured and the Afghans suffered a sanguinary defeat at Herat. Meanwhile the Beg of Kandahar was advancing from Shiraz via Teheran and Samnan with a powerful army. Nadir turned about and, advancing via Meshed, defeated his opponent at the battle of Damaghan in 1729. Pursuing the Beg's retreating army to Ispahan via Kashan, Nadir was opposed by a fresh Afghan army of 30,000 men at Murchakar and the final battle took place at Persepolis, where Nadir's army of 40,000 men gained another brilliant victory. After this battle, Shiraz was reconquered and the whole of Southern Persia freed from the Afghan yoke (1730).

The Shah Takhmasp II then ordered Nadir to desist from warlike operations. The latter refused and, on invading the Shah's Palace, was given the four provinces of Mazanderan, Seistan, Kerman and Khorasan.

The Turks, advancing afresh, were defeated by Nadir at Hamadan and Kermanshah. Tabriz and Ardabil were reconquered, but fresh activity on the

part of the Afghans forced Nadir to march on Herat. This town resisted his siege for several months, during which time the Turks, again falling on Persian territory, forced the Shah to conclude a hasty and shameful peace.

Some time after this, the Shah having been dethroned through the instrumentality of Nadir, the peace was renounced and the Shah's son (Abbas) put on the Persian Throne with Nadir as Regent.

In 1733, war with the Turks was renewed and Baghdad unsuccessfully besieged.

In 1735, Nadir won a victory at Erivan and took Tiflis and, by the peace concluded in 1735, Persia obtained Armenia and Gruzia.

When Abbas, the Shah of Persia, died in 1735, Nadir was made Shah and then decided to prosecute a campaign against the Russians as he had, by this time, completely driven the Turks and Afghans from Persia. But as the Russians had previously renounced their claim to the Province of Gilan and now restored the remaining conquered Persian territory to Nadir, negotiations concluded with a treaty of friendship and Nadir became a suitor for the hand of Elizabeth, the daughter of Peter the Great.

In 1737, Nadir Shah invaded Afghanistan with an army of 80,000 men, having in reserve an army of 40,000. Kandahar was again besieged and taken after 18 months. During this period, an embassy of Indian Princes came to Nadir Shah to propose his invasion of the Mogul Empire.

After his occupation of Kabul, Nadir Shah sent a letter to the Great Mogul (at Delhi) requesting him not to allow any Afghan outlaws into India. As the Great Mogul did not comply with this request, war was decided upon, there being lots of supplies in Afghanistan for an advancing army as the harvest of 1738 had been a particularly fruitful one.

He therefore sent word to his son, Riya Kuli Mirza, who was in Balkh, to march by the Bamian Pass of the Hindu Kush to Kandahar and join the main body, thus bringing it up to a total of 180,000 men. He considered two lines of operation as feasible for the campaign against India :

1. The route from Kandahar to Dera Ghazi Khan (600 miles).
2. The route from Kandahar to Ghazni, Kabul and Peshawar.

The first route was the shorter, but his army would have had to cross some very high peaks of the Suleimans, traverse very barren country and cross the Indus at a point (Dera Ghazi Khan) where it was about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles in breadth. In addition to this, the road from Multan, leading to the Punjab country, was intersected by deep and rapid rivers very difficult to cross, and further there was the Bikaner desert to be taken into account.

The road to Ghazni, Kabul and Peshawar afforded more advantages. It was a regular caravan route between Persia and India, was passable by artillery and lay through thickly populated country.

Nadir Shah chose the route to Ghazni, Kabul and Peshawar and, in September 1738, by capturing Kabul and conquering Northern Afghanistan, opened the way to India.

The Sirdar of Peshawar, who recognized the weakness of the Mogul (Delhi) Government, sent a deputation to Nadir Shah at Kabul, promising subjection and asking for an assurance that his province would not be plundered. Nadir Shah granted this boon to the Peshawar Sirdar and, in November, moved from Kabul to Jelalabad.

Finding out that there were tracks circumventing the Khyber Pass to Jamrud in a Northerly direction, the best known (from Dakka to Sarichub) coming out in rear of the position occupied by the Indian troops, Nadir Shah decided to march round the Pass, as, although the distance would be longer, the road was unguarded and unwatched. He deceived the enemy by sending working parties to repair the pass road, and the Indian troops were thus completely surprised.

Nadir Shah then advanced from Peshawar to Attock which he captured. Mahmud Shah, who was then the Great Mogul in India, on hearing that Nadir Shah had crossed the Indus, sent word to all the vassal princes to come to Lahore with all their forces. From Attock, Nadir Shah's army crossed the Jhelum by the Kogat ford and, attacking the vassal princes (those of the country from Lahore to Shahpur), who were trying to cut off the line of communications of the Persian army, put them all to

flight. The Persian Shah then marched on Lahore and thence to the Sutlej, but, floods interfering with operations, it was only in January 1739 that he reached the town of Sirhind. On his arrival at this latter place, he received information that Mahmud Shah had moved to Karnal (75 miles north of Delhi) with a huge army. The Persian Shah consequently occupied Umballa and, marching south, attacked Mahmud Shah and annihilated his army.

On the 14th of April, Nadir Shah, after looting royally, disdained the Kingship of India and, re-installing the Great Mogul, left Delhi, after 37 days' occupation (some say 52 days), and returned the same way he came.

On the 20th June 1747, Nadir Shah, the greatest man in modern Persian history, was murdered at the instigation of his nephew.

Thus it was the great Nadir Shah who inflicted the fatal blow on the Empire of the Great Moguls and his plunder is estimated at from 8 to 30 millions sterling. By it Europeans (French and English) profited and, France's attention having been drawn away from India by the British, Clive's victory at Plassey decided its future destiny.

Later, Ahmed Shah Durani overthrew the Mahrattas at Panipat in 1761. It was he who had, with the combined Mohammedan forces of the Afghans, previously wrested the Punjab from Delhi, but, not being ambitious of founding a dynasty of his own, allowed Shah Alam, lineal heir

to the Mogul Throne, to rule. The latter was followed by Akbar II and Bahadur Shah. But the Mahrattas were destined, in the near future, to force on Great Britain several sanguinary campaigns and were only finally subdued after the last of the three Mahratta wars (1779-81, 1803-04, 1817-18) after which the Peshwa remained as a pensioner near Cawnpore on a large allowance until his death, and it was his adopted son who grew up into the infamous Nana Sahib of the mutiny (1857), when the last trace of the Peshwas disappeared.

Thus the tidal waves of Asiatic population (pre-Aryan, Aryan, Scythian, Afghan and Mogul) swept across India from the North, and the Hindu, Mohammedan, Mogul and Mahratta fought for supreme power. But Great Britain, far-sighted and ever on the watch, finally asserted her supremacy and became the great administrator of India's destinies. She has been gradually strengthening her hold on this vast and most important continent for the past 150 years.

There have been altogether in the past 21 successful invasions of India, of which the principal were those of Alexander the Great, Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, Timur, Baber and Nadir Shah; and Turkestan and Afghanistan were first conquered and one or other of them made the base of operations.

It is undoubtedly true that the belligerent forces led by Alexander the Great and other past invaders of India were in closer touch with nature than the present-day soldiers of European civilized

nations. They were inured to unwonted hardships and trying conditions of campaigning and frequently fed on the raw flesh of their own transport animals. They, as often as not, exterminated the different races and tribes occupying the theatre of war and consumed all their produce, which action would be considered barbarous in the extreme, according to the humane ideas of modern warfare.

Nadir Shah's advance against Kandahar with 120,000 men goes far to prove the practicability of operations on a large scale through Southern Afghanistan.

Moreover, have not the Franco-German war and more recently the Russo-Japanese war demonstrated to us most vividly the ease with which troops and supplies can be borne to the theatre of war and even right up to the field of battle, on light single lines of railway, easily and rapidly constructed?

The British should not therefore imagine themselves secure from invasion in India on account of the many recognized difficulties confronting a nation advancing on that wealthy possession, but should look to their laurels and guard their prize as best they may. For though, in certain respects, it is an infinitely harder task now-a-days to successfully invade this country, naturally so well defended, still in other respects, the advantages of civilization have made it a much easier one.

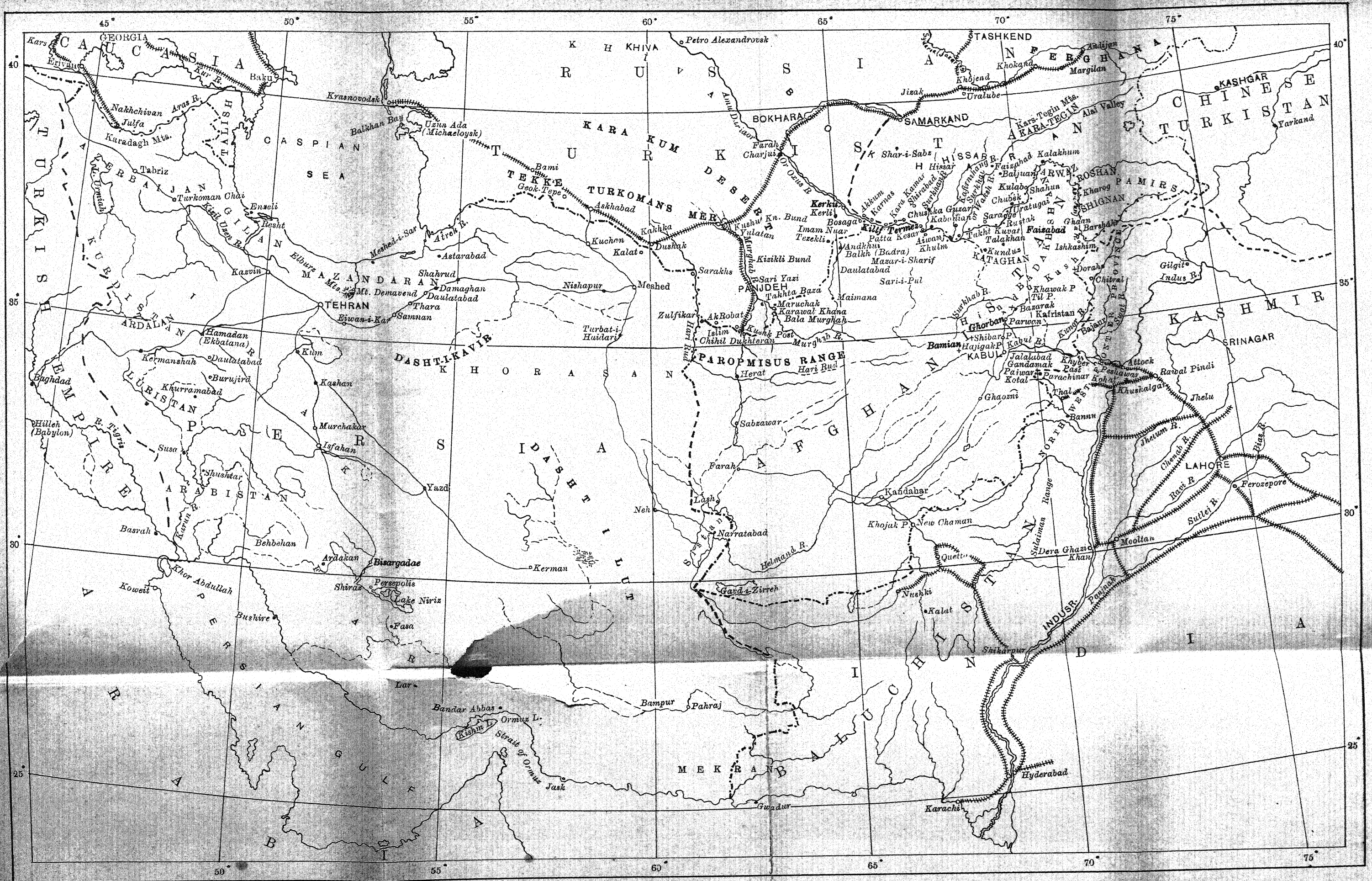
Lord Roberts, in one of his speeches in England a few years ago, referring to a future invasion of India, said: "I must warn my countrymen that the 22nd conquest of India will be much more serious and calamitous than any of the previous ones."

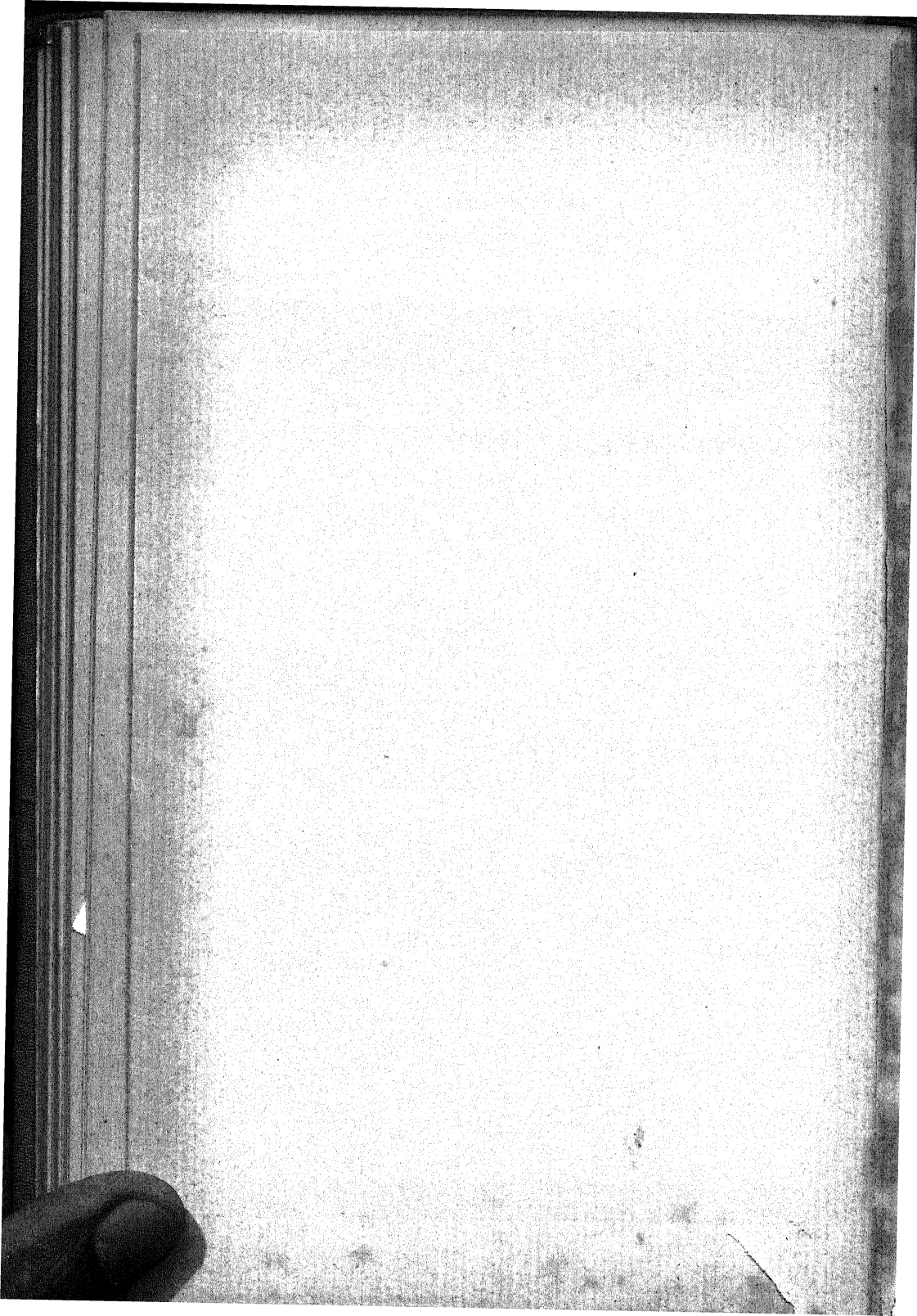
Great Britain must therefore make use of her diplomacy with Afghanistan, that great buffer State of India, even more skilfully in the future than she has done in the past, and also endeavour, by justice and power, to promote the greatest possible sympathy for her rule amongst the numerous different races and peoples inhabiting her great Indian Possessions.

CHAPTER III

Progress of Russia in Central Asia.

MAP ILLUSTRATING RUSSIAN ADVANCE IN CENTRAL ASIA.





CHAPTER III.

Progress of Russia in Central Asia.

AFTER Russia had thrown off the Tartar yoke her people began to emigrate freely beyond their border lands. Their own territory had too much sameness about it and lacked sea-board, their frontiers were impossible ones, and the Slav nation was thus forced to seek some direction for expansion.

Pre-eminently in the 16th and 17th centuries the movement became really national when the natives of Nijni Novgorod commenced, of their own initiative, to expand towards the Ural mountains. (The Stony Girdle).

The Russian kingdom then began to extend itself systematically and inexorably in every direction; but the great easterly movement into Asia was not seriously undertaken until checks had been received in the Northern, Western, and Southern directions.

In the North the Russians reached the sea-board without difficulty, but, owing to the harbours being ice-bound for three-quarters of the year, they did not hope for any special benefit therefrom.

In the West the Slavs came into collision with the Germans and lost some of their family in the persons of the Bohemians, Poles and other tribes.

Towards the South they had always pressed forward with greater obstinacy and more definite aim, being, in this direction, especially drawn towards the Mediterranean Sea and Byzantium, that cradle of their adopted religion and culture; but in the 17th and 18th centuries, they came into collision with the powerful Osmons (later of course in the 19th century, when Turkey lapsed into decay, with Great Britain) by whom their forward movement in this direction was temporarily resisted.

Opposition in the North, West and South forced Russia's energy to seek other outlets and new paths for expansion: there remained Asia which had, as yet, been very little prospected, and they rushed into it in all directions.

There had existed long since three such directions: straight to the South through the Caucasus to the South-East through the Kirghiz steppes and beyond to India and to the East through Siberia to the Pacific Ocean and China.

Asia, whose primitive inhabitants were of Finnish, Mongol and Turcoman stock, offered incomparably less of an obstacle than Europe. The Easterly movement was so natural that the question afterwards arose in Russia as to why it had not been commenced previously (i.e. before the 16th century), and why Russia had allowed other European powers (France and England) to forestall her on the continent of Asia.

In the South-Easterly direction of the Eastern movement negotiations, which were at first purely commercial, with the Mouromtsevs, Pazukhins, etc., as representatives, were started between the Moscow Czars and the Khans of Khiva and Bokhara and ended later in the conquest and subjection of the latters' territories.

In Central Asia, conquests were made and extensions achieved by great Central Asian leaders, such as the Kolpakovs, Chernyaevs, Krenjanovs, Romanovs, Obramovs, Skobolevs and Ionovs, whilst, in the Siberian arena similar conquests and annexations were made by Ermak, Poyarkov, Khabarov, Pashkov and others.

But it was not until the 19th century, when the Russian forward movement in Central Asia was met, in all directions, by counteraction on the part of Great Britain, that the Russian Government commenced to act more decisively and the movement began to assume a more important and organized character, backed up by a regular armed force.

Finally the Russian forward movement "hung fire," and the Amu Daria (the lower branch of the river Oxus) has turned out to be the boundary line of her offensive operations. Although, in the discussion of the *status quo* in Central Asia, I am more nearly concerned with the South-Easterly direction of this great Eastern expansion on the part of Russia, it behoves me, nevertheless, for the

general elucidation of the entire Central Asian Question to summarize the different leading events characterising the forward movements in each of the Easterly directions above described.

Russia, frustrated by the powerful Osmans in her efforts to reach the Mediterranean Sea via the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles abandoned, for the time being, her political aims in this direction, and turned her thoughts towards a conquest of the Caucasus to gain access to the harbours of the Persian Gulf and the Sea.

The Caucasus, owing to their position between the Black and Caspian Seas and their high mountain walls, form a mighty barrier between Europe and Asia.

Russian expeditions to the Caucasus date as far back as the 10th century, but no important achievement in that arena on the part of Russia took place until the year 1722. It was in this year that Persia, attacked by the Afghans, applied to Peter the Great for assistance, which brought about the Russian expedition to Persia in 1722. Derbend and Baku were conquered, and in 1723 both these states and the territories belonging to them, together with Gilan, Mazanderan and Astrabad (on the South Coast of the Caspian Sea) were ceded to Russia.

But Peter the Great's successors, being less far sighted and wishing to be on friendly relations with

Persia, gave back all the acquired territory between 1729 and 1735.

In 1737, by partition treaty between Turkey and Russia, Gilan, Mazanderan, Azerbijan and Astrabad were to pass to Russia but Nadir Shah's seizure of the Persian throne saved this catastrophe. Hence we see that 170 years ago Russia was nearly in possession of the fertile regions on the shores of the Caspian Sea (an admirable base for an Army advancing on Herat and the Indus); she would have had a free way from Astrabad to Delhi a century before Robert Clive disputed with Dupleix for the supremacy in Southern India. But Nadir Shah expelled the Afghans, defeated the Turks and pushed back Russia from the Persian Frontier.

In 1774, renewed fighting for the Caucasus began and Russia acquired the whole of the territory stretching to the foot of the Caucasus, whilst the Tartars on the river Kuban were, by the treaty of Khutschuk Kainardje, declared independent of Turkey.

In 1783 (40 years after Nadir Shah's death) the Empress Catherine of Russia began to prosecute fresh enterprises in Persia and in that same year made a treaty with Heraclius, Prince of Georgia (July 1783), by which the latter renounced dependence on the Shah (Aga Mahomed Khan) and swore allegiance to Russia. Twelve years after the above treaty, the Shah invaded Georgia and parts of Armenia and plundered the Prince's capital (Tiflis).

In 1796-97, Russian armies took Derbend, Baku and other fortresses, and pushed on to the Azerbaijan Frontier, threatening Enzeli, Resht and even Teheran.

In 1801, the kingdom of Georgia, then under Russian suzerainty, was transformed into a Russian province, and from 1802 to 1810 the Ossets and Lesghians as well as the Minralians and Imeritians were subjugated. Persia, long since anxious to ward off Russia's paw, relying on Napoleon, declared war against her.

The war terminated with the unlucky peace of Gulistan (1813), by which Persia lost all her possessions in the Caucasus (the Khanates of Kharabagh, Gandja, Shiruan, Derbend, Kuba, Baku and Talish) and had to grant Russia the exclusive right of maintaining a fleet in the Caspian Sea.

In order that my readers may fully understand the future trend of events, I find it expedient here to cursorily touch on the action of Great Britain, during this period, with regard to Persia.

In 1800, Captain Malcolm left India as envoy to Persia, and in 1801 made two treaties (Political and Commercial). In 1808 he went again to Persia to find French influence supreme there.

When Sir Harford Jones arrived in Persia in 1809 and found French influence had waned, he straightway concluded a treaty with the Shah, who abrogated previous treaties with European Powers.

A further treaty was made by Sir Gore Ouseley in 1812, and ratified in 1814.

In the latter treaty Great Britain bound herself to assist Persia against any other belligerent power or subsidise her for purposes of resistance.

Thus in 1826, Fattah Ali Shah (the Shah of Persia), goaded on by the war party headed by the Crown Prince Abbas Mirza, imagining he would be able to count on British support (according to the treaty of 1814), marched into Russian territory and appealed to Great Britain for aid. Persia's request was refused as the Home Authorities in England did not then recognize the importance of Persia and Herat, although Mr. Ellis and Sir John McNiell were fully cognisant of it.

Paskevitch concluded a successful campaign, and, by the treaty of Turkomanchai, Russia obtained possession of Erivan, Nakhitcheran * and Persian Armenia, in addition to great commercial concessions.

This treaty was a triumph for Russia and a great blow for Great Britain.

After the treaty of Turkomanchai, signed under our mediation, we hurriedly sought to free ourselves from the obligations which we had been eager to accept in 1814. The 3rd and 4th articles of the treaty were cancelled, thus also abrogating the 6th

* Written Nakhchivan on the maps.

and 7th, and a large sum of money was paid by Great Britain to Persia as compensation.

Thus, by our refusal to assist Persia, we set her friendship at nought, and the Shah was used as a tool of the Czar's to produce a rupture between England and Persia, culminating in the siege of Herat.

Russian prestige gradually became paramount in Teheran, and her foresight was pre-eminently justified in her co-operation with Great Britain to place Mahomed Shah upon the throne of Persia, on the death of his grandfather, Futteh Ali Shah in 1834.

Under Mahomed Shah's rule Russian influence increased to such an extent that Ellis (British Minister in Persia) was recalled, although he was not responsible for this gradual Russian supremacy, and had pointed out to the Home Government in 1835 the great danger of the Shah's friendship with Simonitch.

The latter encouraged Shah Mahomed to extend his dominions into Afghanistan and, in 1837, the Persian Shah besieged Herat with about 30,000 men.

In 1838 Sir John McNiell, who had replaced Ellis, left Teheran for the seat of war, and it was only during the siege of Herat that he received the long-demanded authority from Lord Palmerston to present an ultimatum to the Shah, and it was then too late. British demands were offensively refused,

and a fleet was despatched to the Persian Gulf, and the island of Kharrack occupied.

Meanwhile England had been assisting Shuja-ul-mulk (who was in sanctuary with the British) to obtain his rights in Afghanistan, and treating the Barakrai chiefs, Dost Mahomed and Kohundil Khan, as usurpers of the Afghan throne.

Russia saw her chance and, profiting by internal divisions in Afghanistan and dissensions in India, (even in Lahore, where the British were supporting the Sikhs under Runjit Singh) sent Vitkovitch to Kandahar.

The Russian ambassador made a treaty with Kohundil and went on to Kabul to confer with the Ameer Dost Mahomed, who also agreed, after much persuasion, to the proposed Russo-Afghan alliance.

Vitkovitch had virtually secured his alliance whilst the siege of Herat was still in progress, (half a dozen Russian regiments would have made it successful) but the disastrous failure of that siege, together with Great Britain's bold action in occupying the island of Kharrack, had discredited Russia's reputation and, on England's decisive invasion of the Ameer Dost Mahomed's dominions, constituting the Afghan War of 1839 (brought about by Russian intrigue), Russia's heart failed her.

Count Nesselrode disowned Simonitch and Captain Vitkovitch. The former was recalled and the latter, smarting under a sense of the wrongs which

he had undergone at the hands of his government, committed suicide.

Thus, when the British advanced on Kandahar, the Afghan princes alone were left to bear the brunt of their indignation.

The plot to obtain Herat, evolved with so much care on behalf of Russia, had failed owing to her own inaction and to the brilliancy of Eldred Pottinger's ten months' defence, backed up by Shah Kumran, nephew of Shuja-ul-mulk.

After 1838-39 Russia's vigorous action in Persia came to an end. Count Simonitch was replaced at the Persian Court by General Duhamel, who, fifteen years later, during the Crimean War, proposed the despatch of an expedition against India.

In 1848 Russia concluded an extremely favourable treaty with Persia, by which Resht and Astrabad were opened up as harbours for her warships, and she was granted the right of working mines in these parts and laying down roads necessary for their exploitation.

In 1853 Great Britain made an agreement with the Shah, binding him not to touch the province of Herat. This truce was hollow, and in 1854 the British Minister left Teheran.

In 1856 Herat was occupied by Persia, and the British declared war, occupying the island of

Kharrack (as in 1838); but peace was made in 1857, and an alliance concluded with the Ameer Dost Mahomed.

In 1859 the conquest of the Caucasus was completed by Russia, and all the efforts of the Russian Government were directed towards providing a firm, organised government for the newly-acquired territories and laying down roads and railways to open up the Caucasus and adjacent territories to trade and commerce.

Only once after this did serious insurrection break out in the newly-conquered territories, at the instigation of Turkish Agents during the Russo-Turkish War of 1878-79.

This war against Turkey brought Russia a further increase of territory by the peace of St. Stefano, which, according to the conditions of the Berlin Congress, was limited to Kars, Ardahan and Batoum. Since that time Russia has obtained no more territory in the Caucasus.

As regards Persia, it seems that Russia has bested Great Britain at all points in the diplomatic struggle for political weight there.

In 1872 Russia was granted certain railway concessions in Persia, and it was in that year that the Granville-Gortchakov negotiations brought the Central Asian Question before the public. By the Russo-Persian treaty of 1900, Russia obtained the right to establish branches of the Russian Imperial

Bank in Persia, and one was opened in November of that year. A Convention was also signed about that time between the Persian and British Governments for the construction of a telegraph line from Kashan via Yezd, Kerman and Bamfur to Baluchistan.

During 1901 the Sultan of Turkey attempted to made the Sheikh of Koweit recognize his suzerainty. The Sheikh appealed to the Indian Government, and a British warship prevented the landing of a second body of Turkish troops.

This protection given to Sheikh Mubarik was regarded as an assumption by Great Britain of Supremacy in the Persian Gulf, and as evidence of an intention to make Koweit a British port. Other powers, therefore, demanded ports, particularly Russia, who wanted Bunder Abbas, as compensation.

The claims of Great Britain were based, not on definite treaties or international law, but on the necessity of guarding her position in India, and on what she had done to regain the Gulf from barbarism.

The Northern shore of the Persian Gulf is divided between Persia and Baluchistan; the Southern shore is the Arabian peninsula, over which Turkey claims suzerainty, although her possessions there are limited to Basra alone. The whole of the Southern shore is held by petty chiefs who for long lived by piracy. Early in the last century, however, England put down piracy and the slave

trade, and has continued to perform the duties of buoying, lighting and policing the Gulf whilst enjoying a practical monopoly of the trade.

Nevertheless the only place in the Persian Gulf which is actually British territory, is about a square mile of country at Bassadore.

It is thus obviously open to any great European Power, desiring to establish itself in these waters, to obtain a concession from Turkey or Persia, and it was the attempt of Germany to obtain a port in connection with the Baghdad railway that really led to our interference in Koweit in 1901.

The Baghdad Railway Convention was signed on the 5th March, 1903. The main line was to run from the Sea of Marmora to Baghdad with an extension to the Persian Gulf. It was started on a year's concession, and was to be completed in 8 years' time. It was called the "Baghdad Railway Company," and the railway was to be single line, to be increased to double, should the receipts accruing warrant such a course.

The first section proper runs to Eregli, North of the Taurus Mountains, and was opened in October, 1904, and continued to Boulgourlu, west of the Taurus Mountains, in 1905.* It has now been authorised and the money is forthcoming for its

* A halt has been made at Boulgourlu for the last three years owing to the fact that this 2nd section (Taurus Mts.) will cost about £3,000,000 and the loan issued by the Turkish Government for Section I fetched only £1,868,000.

continuation to Mosul on the Tigris, some 840 kilometres further. Survey work is being carried out, but it is improbable that its construction will be actually commenced until the summer of 1910. Bridges are the only difficulty, as one over the Euphrates and two over the Tigris are necessary. The expense will, of course, be very great. From Konia to Basra is 1,250 miles, and the proposed extension to Koweit is 100 miles more.

France and England were invited to join the enterprise in 1903, Germany impressing upon England the importance of having an outlet at Koweit, and of connecting the Baghdad railway with India to accelerate the Indian Mails, thus endeavouring to whiten her deep-laid schemes to obtain another road to India via Austria and the Baghdad railway. Major Brauch Hausen, in his recent book "*The Coming War*," says:—"Now, what can Germany do against England? By sea, nil, as an invasion of her coast is impossible. Germany must be considered an ally of Russia, and in opposition to the new Anglo-Japanese alliance. We must win over Islam to the German Cause." The Baghdad Railway Company in 1905 paid a dividend of 6%.

Koweit is four days from Bombay, and is practically a British Protectorate, the Sheikh refusing to lease territory without leave from Great Britain.

Any railway line reaching the Persian Gulf entirely under foreign control must necessarily clash

with British interests, and must therefore be opposed by Great Britain.

It is also probable that Russia would be against a line entirely under German control and it remains to be seen what action the Powers will take in view of an attempt being made to prolong this railway to the Gulf. In 1902 the Discount Loan Bank of Persia (Russian) was employed by the Russian Government in advancing about thirteen millions sterling to Persia on the security of her customs, and an agreement was then made to the effect that Persia should not enter into a loan treaty with any other power during the repayment of the above loan (due in 75 years), and should grant no railway concessions to any other power, except Russia.

Shortly after the above agreement, Russia settled an old debt of Persia's to England, and thus freed the sea-coast customs, and weakened British influence in Southern Persia.

According to the British Press, special mention was made in the agreement of a proposed line from the Central Asian Railway running to Meshed-Khaf-Birjand-Kerman and Bunder Abbas, with a branch line from Meshed to Nasratabad.

Two further railway schemes in these parts have been recently discussed in the Russian Press, viz.: Teheran-Shahrud-Meshed-Kushk and Askabad-Birjand-Chahbar.

The projected line through Meshed to Nasratabad would possess great importance in an advance of Russia towards Afghanistan, as permitting of a rapid concentration of troops far beyond her frontiers and facilitating operations by securing the line of communications.

The Russian railway Erivan—Julfa has recently been completed, and a line from Erivan via Teheran to Kushk would form a self-contained line of transport to the Afghan frontier, whilst a line connecting the Caspian Sea ports with those of the Gulf (at Bunder Abbas) would render the occupation of Persia an impossibility to the British. It is very likely, as a result of the Russo-Persian treaty of 1902, that Russia will endeavour to push the construction of the Julfa-Teheran-Bunder Abbas railway, and acquire the Bunder Abbas harbour.*

A similar action, on the part of Russia, was effected in the conclusion of the Russo-Chinese Loan Treaty after the peace of Shimonoseki. The loan, raised in Russia, was followed by the foundation of the Manchurian Railway Company, and the lease of Port Arthur and Talienwan to Russia.

Lord Curzon, when Viceroy of India, paid a visit to the Persian Gulf in 1903 and returned, after many interviews with the various Sheikhs, fully impressed by Russia's position in Persia. For,

* This scheme will, of course, remain in abeyance for the present on account of the Anglo-Russian Agreement.

although Russia's aims in Persia are apparently chiefly commercial, there is ever before her the hope of acquiring a port in the Gulf and gaining access to the Arabian Sea.

Persia is now practically entirely under Russian influence and it is probable that Russia may, in the near future, have the complete control of the Persian customs. In Teheran there are two Russian and one English Bank, the Russian Banks having branches at Tabriz and Resht.

In 1903 the *Russki Invalid* newspaper stated that there was to be, in the near future, a regular Russian steamer service between Odessa and the Persian Gulf but this has not yet come into being. The spread of the Russian language is especially noticeable in Persia as well as the foundation of an Orthodox Greek community by Persian subjects in North-West Persia. A Russian commercial school has been started in Teheran, and many Russian Engineers and Surveyors are sent out there. A number of Persian merchants live in Russia and trade there, especially in July and August, during the great annual world's fair at Nijni Novgorod.

On the whole, Russia improved her position in Persia greatly in 1903, as she strengthened her financial hold over the country, concluded a commercial treaty favourable to herself, prevented any material trade concession being granted to Great Britain and induced Persia to administer a distinct

social rebuff to the Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, when in the Gulf in that year.

It is however stated that, in 1904, owing to the effect of Russia's non-success in the Russo-Japanese War, her prestige has been considerably impaired. This is not entirely true, as Russia's financial position certainly did not diminish in strength, and in 1905 the Shah visited St. Petersburg and Russian influence made undoubted progress in Persian affairs.

The total population of Persia is about 9,000,000, one-third of which are nomads. The Government is corrupt and the army, which now consists of about 80 battalions (23 always embodied), Life Guards of the Shah (1,500 men), the Cossack Brigade of 125 irregular regiments, organized by Russian Officers in 1879, detachments of Artillery (150 breech-loading guns), and six batteries of horse artillery, numbering in all 115,000 men, is in a deplorable condition.

In the estimation of Russian Officers 10,000 regular troops are sufficient to cope with Persia.

Persia lies on the road of a flank or rear attack against both Turkey and Afghanistan. She was neutral during the Russo-Turkish War of 1878, but she massed some of her troops on the Turkish frontiers to show her friendship to Russia.

Russia's endeavours to reach the open sea in this direction, would, in the event of their being

made the primary aim (i.e. preferable to another endeavour to reach the Mediterranean or Yellow Seas) in case of opposition, prepare the way for an advance past Herat on India.

Thus the Seistan Question may play an important part in the future. A Russian force stationed there would command Western Afghanistan and Herat by means of roads radiating from Nasratabad along the water courses towards South-West Afghanistan. The march from Kushk through Herat and Farah to Kandahar is 420 miles, and from the frontier of Seistan to Kandahar it is only 240 miles.

Thus a railway to Nasratabad and the occupation of Seistan by Russia would shorten her advance by 180 miles.

Great Britain has, of course, recognised the importance of Seistan and has made it her aim to secure her relations with Southern Persia from Baluchistan as well as from the Coast, whilst Russia was improving her status in Northern Persia by reason of continental vicinity and the construction of the Caucasus and Trans-Caspian railways. By the building of these railways, Russia has practically monopolised the trade of Northern Persia.

From the time when Russia came into contact with England in Persia, she has carried on the contest by diplomatic and peaceful methods, endeavouring to become master of the Persian trade, and to increase her political influence over the

country and pave the way for her further progress in Central Asia. Great Britain, on the other hand, is neither willing to surrender the Persian trade to Russia, nor to allow her to obtain access to the sea and a harbour in the Persian Gulf. England also has a great political interest in the future of Persia, for, should Russia be able to get the country completely under her influence, she would possess a threatening flank position for expeditions against India.

Thus has Persia been treated as a pawn in the great international game played by Russia and Great Britain in Central Asia.

The recently concluded Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 has, according to many people, materially altered the aspect of affairs and should safeguard the integrity and independence of Persia. I intend to touch on this agreement later in this book; but I may now assert that conventions and agreements of this particular sort are only lasting up to the time of a declaration of war or of an act amounting to a *casus belli*, after which they are not even worth the paper on which they are written.

As touching the Easterly direction of Russia's great expansion into Asia, it was only towards the end of the 16th century that a commencement was made, on behalf of the Russian people, independent of Government to conquer and colonize the vast territories of plains and highlands of Northern Asia which form Siberia (from the Ural mountains

to the coast of the Pacific Ocean). Ermak, with his band of highwaymen was the first great mover in this direction.

From 1577 to 1582 he crossed the Ural mountains and captured Ssibir, the capital of a Tartar chief, and subjected his territory. The inauguration, on the part of Great Britain, of the East India Company about 1600 A. D. may be treated as an historical parallel of the commencement of this great movement on the part of Russia.

Ermak, later on, subjected himself to John IV. (The Terrible) of Russia, who took the title of Czar of Ssibir.

Further subjugation of Siberia was effected by the Cossacks.

From 1578 to 1633 the towns of Tobolsk, Tomsk, Yeniseisk, Krasnoyarsk and Yakutsk were founded.

In 1639 Russian Cossacks viewed the Sea of Okotsk and in 1648 the Cossack Deshnev, pressing forward through the Arctic Ocean from the river Kolima, passed through the straits between Russia and America (named after the explorer Behring). Up to this time the Russian advance had been practically unopposed, but Khabarov, a Russian merchant, was ineffectually resisted by the Manchurians in his efforts to subject the Chinese Amur Province. This latter was subjected to Russia, but restored to China by the Treaty of Nertchinsk in 1689.

To illustrate the former geographical ignorance of nations as regards this quarter of the globe, it may be here mentioned that it was only in 1808 that the Japanese discovered that Saghalien was not a peninsula, but an island.

The next event which concerned Russia, in this particular arena, was the seizure of the Amur Province by Muraviev, Governor-General of Eastern Siberia.

In this connection may be mentioned the proposed Nertchins to Khabarovsk Railway along the Amur River (1,400 miles) in Trans-Baikalia, which has recently been discussed by the Duma in St. Petersburg. It had been previously mooted some years ago before the great Manchurian Railway scheme came into being. This line, connecting Vladivostock with European Russia, across the fertile Amur Province would subject nearly all Manchuria to Russian influence. Thus it would seem that Russia has not yet given up all idea of again obtaining access to the waters of the Yellow Sea, although this railway would probably be now necessary in any case unless Russia only wished to hold the Amur Province at the good-will of Japan. The treaties of Aigun in 1858 and Peking in 1860 ceded all the territory up to the Amur to Russia. In 1875 Japan ceded the whole of Saghalien to Russia and received the Kurile Islands in return. Japan's chief interest, of course, lay in Korea and in

1885, by the Treaty of Tientsin, she obtained equal rights there with China.

The Chino-Japanese War over Korea in 1894 was concluded in 1895 by the treaty of Shimonoseki, by which China recognised the absolute independence of Korea and, in addition to Formosa, ceded the southern end of the Liaoyung peninsula to Japan. But Russia complained that the peace of Asia might be disturbed by Japan possessing this territory and, pressure having been brought to bear by the Powers, the Mikado gave way and restored the conquered territory to China.

In 1898 the same territory was leased to Russia (Port Arthur, etc.) by the Treaty of Peking.

In addition Russia was granted a concession to build a railway through Manchuria—so called Eastern Chinese Railway. By means of this railway Russia paved the way to a conquest of Manchuria and, a favourable opportunity for military occupation having arisen in 1900, owing to the risings in China when all the Great Powers sent troops thither, Russia acted accordingly.

Moreover in Korea Russia was gaining influence, owing to the hatred of the Japanese by the Koreans. Russian Officers and N.-C. O's were sent to drill the Koreans and a Russian Bank established there.

Russia made no attempt to evacuate Manchuria and Japan saw her very existence threatened. She

found in England a willing ally and in 1902 the Anglo-Japanese treaty was concluded. Japan then tried to settle the matter diplomatically and failing in her endeavours, declared war against Russia.

By the peace of Portsmouth in 1905, Russia ceded Liaoyung peninsula with Port Arthur as well as half of the island of Saghalien to Japan, restored Manchuria to China and recognised a Japanese Protectorate over Korea.

Moreover as the Manchurian Railway to Vladivostock still remains in Russian hands and from Harbin to Port Arthur has passed into Japanese hands, Manchuria has been divided into two great spheres of influence, that of Russia in the North and of Japan in the South.

Thus has Japan's supremacy been assured in Eastern Asia for some time to come ; nevertheless the reverses of Jena and Amerstadt were not lasting Prussian reverses but forerunners of victory. History repeats itself, and should Russia decide once more to cross swords with Japan, it will be with a full knowledge of the difficult task before her, and it will be a Russia, strong, freshly-constituted and reformed that will strive to regain the supremacy of the Far East.

Passing on to the South-easterly movement which, together with the Southern movement in the great expansion into Asia, most nearly concerns the

Central Asian Question of the present day, one ascertains from past historical narratives that certain Russian, Khivan and Bokharian merchants had, in the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries, established communications between Persia, Central Asia and China on the one side and the small Russian Principalities on the other.

In the second decade of the 18th century Peter the Great despatched several expeditions to Central Asia, partly to seek for gold and partly to discover a trade route to India. In 1716 Peter the Great's famous Ukass* was given to Prince Tcherkassky to construct a fortress for 1,000 men at the former mouth of the Amu Daria River (where it used to flow into the Caspian Sea) and then march along the old bed of the river to Khiva to discover whether the river could not be again conducted into one of its original channels and thus give Russia a continuous waterway from the Caspian Sea through Central Asia.

The Prince was also instructed to induce the Khan of Khiva to recognise Russian supremacy, by sending an expedition up the Amu Daria to investigate as to how far up it was navigable and to establish friendly relations with the Khan of Bokhra.

From 1716 to 1837 nothing was done on the Oxus, but from 1837 to 1839 Proffsky's expedition

* Ukass is an imperial edict.

took place and was followed by those of Ivanov and Lomakin.

Proffsky's expedition was styled the first Russo-Khivan expedition and consisted of 10,000 men in all, a body of whom were Kirghiz ; those of Ivanov and Lomakin were unimportant.

In 1864 the town of Turkestan was captured by Tchernaiiev and England tried to check a further advance by diplomatic intervention, but was assured by Prince Gortchakov in a circular note that Russia had no aggressive intentions.

In 1764 General Tchernaiiev also captured Chimkent and in 1865 Tashkent. Khojend was captured in 1866 and in 1867 the Steppe Commission of which Monsieur de Giers, Head of the Asiatic department of the Foreign Office, was a prominent member, laid the seeds of Russian power in Central Asia.

Up to 1867 affairs in Turkestan had been conducted, haphazard, by a governor at Orenburg, but, after the successes of Tchernaiiev, Krijhanov and Romanov, a Governor-General was appointed at Tashkent. Governor-General Romanov, after about four months' tenure of office, was succeeded, as Governor-General, by General Kauffmann who became a slave to the advice of men like Abramov and Kolpakov.

In 1868 General Kauffmann ordered an advance into Bokharian territory and Samarkhand surren-

dered, the Ameer of Bokhara tendering a full submission to Russia after the battle of Zera-balak and adopting the same position with regard to Russia as the Khan of Kelat did to Great Britain after the treaty of 1854. It is very probable that the Ameer of Bokhara took an active part in the Russian mission to Kabul under General Stolyetov in 1878, as England had refused to treat with Bokhara on account of the fact that Stoddart and Conolly were captured in Bokhara in 1839 and put to death by torture in 1842. Thus, between 1810 and 1854, the Russian frontier had been extended up to the Syr Daria (upper Oxus) and by 1868 Turkestan, Chimkent, Tashkent and Samarkhand had been captured.

Meanwhile up to 1869 Russia had been erecting forts on the Eastern Coast of the Caspian Sea and establishing a firm footing there to hold possession of the naphtha springs and productive fisheries and to open trade routes in this direction to Central Asia.

Hence they had to punish the Turcomans for raiding, and their frontier was, in this manner, extended as far as Kizil Arvat and the salt lake Sar-i-kul in 1870.

In 1872 Khiva applied to Great Britain for assistance. This Lord Northbrook refused on Russia stating she would redress her grievances.

The second (so-called) expedition against Khiva took place in 1875 and resulted in a complete success,

the Khan of Khiva surrendering to General Kauffmann and swearing allegiance to the Czar.

In 1873 to 1874 the Trans-Caspian District was formed.

In 1876 Khokand became the Russian province of Ferghana, Skobolev annexing Khokand, Margilan and Andijan, being the remainder of the Khokand Khanate.

After the Russian successes in Khiva, came the Anglo-Russian agreement by which Russia bound herself to abstain from interfering with the boundaries of Afghanistan as fixed by Great Britain.

The Oxus question had been occupying Russia's attention for many years and many endeavours were made to discover some means of turning the river off into its original channels of 230 years ago (Doudon or Kunya Daryalik) whence it would discharge itself into the Caspian Sea and thus give Russia a continuous waterway through Central Asia. The idea was to conduct the river by one of the above channels to Balkan Bay on the Caspian Sea. These channels are low and level hollows in the Khivan plain.

Herr Kiepert, in the National Zeitung, gave it as his opinion that it was impossible to turn the Oxus back to its original channels, while General Stebnitsky's report in 1873 to 1874, after a 450

miles' exploration of the river bed, reduced to a myth the idea of having a continuous water-way from Moscow to the Khulm or Kunduz rivers.

But in 1879 Russia announced that the Oxus had returned to her original bed and this news caused great consternation in England, as, had it been true, it would have produced a revolution in Central Asian affairs. The news however proved to be nothing more than a "scare" as the announcement was caused by the bursting of the dam in the Loudon Canal, constructed 20 years before.

The schemes for the transfer of the waters of the Oxus into their old channels having thus come to nought and several expeditions having failed, during 1874 to 1879, owing to the barrenness of the land and bad communications, it was decided to build a railway.

In 1879 Russia, on the invitation of Persia, sent an expedition from Chikisliar through Kizil Arvat against the Turcomans, but the attack on Geok Tepe was repulsed and the force returned.

Shortly after this England endeavoured to persuade the Ameer of Afghanistan to allow her to run a railway to Kandahar and Herat, but Skobolev saved the situation for Russia by his successful campaign in 1881, when he stormed and took Geok Tepe and annexed Askabad and Tejend, which were merged into the district of Trans-Caspia.

In the year 1884, the Merv oasis voluntarily tendered its submission to Russia and the latter then advanced her frontier to Kushk, crossing that of Afghanistan.

After this, while negotiations were being conducted between Russia and Great Britain concerning the settlement of the Russo-Afghan boundary, the regrettable Panjdeh incident occurred on the 30th March, 1885, in which General Alikhanov was involved.

According to Russian opinion it would have been then possible to take Herat also, but in 1887 the frontier was definitely fixed and the disputed territory allotted to Trans-Caspia. War had only just been averted, the Ameer of Afghanistan having said it was not worth while quarrelling about such a small bit of territory.*

Alikhanov, the man who so nearly flung Russia into a war with England and Afghanistan, was a Central Asian Mohomeddan, who had russianised his name, "Ali Khan," and was nicknamed "The Red Bearded Giant." It was he who acquired Merv for Russia, without a shot being fired, through his influence with the Turcomans. The Panjdeh incident made him famous and, in this connection, much correspondence passed between Lord Lytton and

* Gladstone's speech in the House of Commons proposing a vote of eleven millions sterling was made on the 27th April, 1885, and the money was voted in a single night.

the Ameer Abdur Rahman. His promotion in the Russian Army was most exceptional, Russia usually not even employing her Central-Asian subjects in her fighting line and thus adopting a policy diametrically opposite to that of Great Britain. General Alikhanov was killed by a bomb about four years ago.

The Pamirs, which had formerly belonged to the Khanate of Khokand, were not occupied by Russia until 1891. The Afghans were then occupying Wakhan and the Chinese Sar-i-kul. After the despatch of several Russian detachments in 1891, 1892 and 1893, by way of demonstration, and the expulsion of the Afghans and Chinese, the Pamir Boundary question was settled in 1893 by the Durand Agreement.

Under this agreement Russia was to remain in possession of the Pamirski post, the Sar-i-kul lake and the line of the Panjah river at and south of Kala-i-Wamar; to Afghanistan fell the western and to Bokhara the eastern parts of the territories of Roshan, Shignan and Wakhan, the southern boundary of Afghanistan in the Pamirs running along the Hindu Kush.

Afghanistan also retained possession of Badakhshan in return for the cession to Bokhara of the portions of Darwaz, Roshan, Shignan and Wakhan situated on the right bank of the Panjah river.

Bokhara, being completely in the hands of Russia, is quite prepared to recognise, as the Russian frontier in the Pamirs, the line from Kala-i-Wamar along the Panjah over Sung and along the Pamir river, across the Sar-i-Kul lake and Kizil Robat into the country of the sources of the Aksu.

All the way between British and Russian territory lies that narrow strip of Afghan country, which, between the Panjah and Pamir rivers on the one side and the lofty mountain ridge of the Hindu Kush on the other, runs towards the Chinese frontier.

The Russian government bound itself to abstain from any interference in the affairs of this Afghan territory and recognised it as belonging to the British sphere of influence, in return for which Great Britain promised not to make any military preparations there and agreed to leave the Ameer in full possession of his rule. This territory, therefore, was regarded as neutral for both Great Britain and Russia.

Russia now keeps about 130 men at Pamirski Port whence, by reason of the means of communication, the mountain region can be most easily dominated.

As a set-off to the Russian occupation of the Pamirs Great Britain, in 1895, profited by an upheaval in Chitral to make it a vassal state, with

a view to prevent the Russians working upon the feelings of the hill tribes and setting them in motion against the British lines of communication.

I may cite, as an example of the danger likely to be caused to an operating army by these warlike frontier tribes, that in 1897 it took about 70,000 native and British troops to quell the risings caused by certain Mullahs on their return from pilgrimage to Mecca amongst the Mahomedan frontier tribes between the Tochi and Swat rivers.

In 1893 Great Britain had obtained from Afghanistan, by means of a treaty with the Ameer Abdur Rahman, the right of extending her influence over the tribes occupying the neutral ground between her frontiers and those of Afghanistan (a strip of country from 6 to 96 miles wide) which has considerably strengthened her position in that locality.

In 1898 Turkestan with Trans-Caspia and the Semirechia district were together formed into the new "Government of Turkestan" and the management of all civil and military administrative business was thus placed under the control of one man.

During the insurrectionary attempt in Andijan in 1898, the Khans of Bokhara (about half a million population) and Khiva (about 2 millions population) seized the opportunity of manifesting their loyalty to Russia and the Czar, and the strength of the Russian military forces used (40,000 men) must

have convinced the natives of the futility of any longer endeavouring to shake off the Russian rule.

Russia has, during the last 25 years of action in Central Asia, executed considerable and expensive railway constructions under great difficulties and principally for military requirements. The fact that some of these railways represent a financial loss to Russia goes far to prove that they are not mere economic necessities, though I may mention that the annual exports from Khorassan via the Central Asian railway are constantly increasing and in 1893 had reached 500,000 tons.

The Trans-Caspia railway was decided upon, after the failure of the 1879 expedition and by 1898 the Merv-Kushk railway extension of 200 miles joining the Trans-Caspian railway at Merv junction, was completed.

In 1900-1901 the post road from Samarkhand to Termez was built. The construction of the *Samara-Orenburg-Tashkent railway was begun in 1899 and finished in 1905. From Andijan, the terminus of this line, a good road has been made to Osh, whence there is a cart track right into the Pamirs. A railway extension, Samarkhand to Termez, is to be expected in the near future as well as a joining up of the Siberian railway with the Samara-Orenburg-Tashkent line, by way of Tomsk-Semipalatinsk-Chimkent-Tashkent.

* Samara is situated on the Volga.

There is now a proposal to extend the Erivan-Julfa line which has recently been completed, to Teheran and thus render the Nasratabad line possible by pressure brought to bear on Persia.

The projected railways, Meshed-Birjand-Kerman-Bunder Abbas; Meshed-Nasratabad and Erivan-Teheran-Kushk, have just been previously discussed, as has also the proposed Amur railway—Nertchinsh to Khaharovsk (1,400 miles).

The Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907 concludes the history of Russian Progress in Central Asia up to the present date. This agreement constitutes a great diplomatic victory for Russia, for reasons which I shall enumerate later.*

During the whole lengthy period of Russia's forward movement in Central Asia, her explorations have been comparatively few and, although North of the Hindu Kush she has done more than Great Britain, still South of these mountains her explorations sink into mere insignificance.

In 1714 and 1715 the Oxus was explored and in 1837 Peroffsky, Ivanov and Lomakin conducted other explorations.

General Stebnitshi fully explored the Oxus in 1873-1875.

In 1876 Prince Dolgorouki visited Central Asia and in the autumn of that year Gregor Potanin crossed the Altai mountains.

* I may mention that, in recent times, Russia has managed to gain concessions from the Dalai Lama in Tibet favoring Russian trade and, through Lhasa, at the bidding of the Lama, has been able to exert considerable influence amongst the surrounding tribes.

Colonel Prejevalsky, who is compared by Boulger to Marco Polo, made extensive explorations in China, Mongolia, Tangut and Eastern Turkestan in 1876-1879 escorted by 6 Cossacks and a Kirghiz interpreter. He followed the Ili river to its junction with the Kash and by the lower Kunges along the Haidu to Charimoti N. W. of Korea, N. of the Tarim river, thence by the Tarim to Charchalik (200 miles from Cherchen on the outskirts of the Gobi Desert). He identified the lake Kara Koshun with the Lob Nor.

Captain Kuropatkin (recently General Commanding-in-Chief in the Russo-Japanese War) conducted certain explorations in Turkestan during the seventies.

In 1877-1878 Maiev, the Editor of the *Tashkent Gazette*, made two expeditions to explore the road to Shirabad (from Kirshi) and its branches to Hissar and Khoja Saleh.

In 1876, 1878, 1879, the Turkestan authorities made several explorations, Otshanian explored the Karategin and Muschketov the Northern Pamirs.

As regards explorations South of the Hindu Kush, Vitkovitch went, as Russian ambassador, to Afghanistan in 1838.

In 1878 General Stolyetov was sent on a similar mission. In 1880 General Grodyekov carried out his ride through Afghanistan. In 1888-1889 the Russian Officer Gromchevski crossed the

Pamirs and Hindu Kush to Gilgit while another penetrated to Chitral and back, with the supposed object of inducing a political rising against Great Britain. Colonel Ionov's expedition in 1891 concludes the Russian exploration and reconnaissances.

According to the *Cologne Gazette*, Russia proposes, in the near future, to send an expedition, under a strong military escort to spend two years surveying and exploring Southern Mongolia and the Western Chinese provinces of Kasu and Szechwan starting from Kiakiu. Referring to Russian work in Central Asia Herr Von Helwald in "*The Russians in Central Asia*" says "Everywhere the Russians have improved the progress of science and knowledge in Central Asia."

Boulger, on the other hand, says "Territory already Russian is neglected and territory about to become Russian is eagerly mapped out. Her reward can only be found in Persia, China or India and on the question of which it is to be hinges the whole Central Asian Question."

"The Russian Government has sanctioned explorations only for its own selfish ends: science owes nothing to them and they confer no benefits on mankind. Russian explorers are only the scouts of the Russian Army."

Professor Snessarev, referring to British and Russian explorations in Afghanistan, says:—

"When a comparison is made between British and Russian explorations in Afghanistan,

one is struck by the fact, that, while all the great explorations of Elphinstone in 1809, of Moorcroft and Trebek in 1819, of Masson and Sterling in 1828 and of Vine, Burnes, Lord, Budd and Leach in 1830-35 were being pressed forward on the part of the British not a single Russian had even reached Afghanistan. We cannot fail to marvel at both the opportuneness of the explorations, the choice of the explorers and the stubborn energy of the authorities."

"Our meagre explorations can bear no comparison to those of Great Britain."

"It is hard to believe that, although we drew near Afghanistan twenty years before Great Britain, we have not only not succeeded in obtaining equal rights there, but have shown ourselves politically weak and have agreed to an impossible frontier with Afghanistan."

Thus for the past 300 years has Russia been expanding in her endeavours to reach the open sea, but only during the last 50 years has the pushing forward of her frontiers given a more solid foundation to hitherto vague schemes.

From 1768 to 1878, in furtherance of her mighty schemes and attempts to reach the sea, she fought six campaigns, at heavy loss of life, against the decadent Ottoman Empire.

The first war resulted in the Russian frontiers being moved from the Dnieper to the Bug (1774) and gave Russia free navigation on the Black Sea

and through the Dardanelles and a protectorate over the Danube Principalities.

The second war extended her frontier up to the Dniester (1792), the third up to the Pruth (1812), and the fourth over the mouths of the Danube (1829), and up to Adrianople.

By the peace of Adrianople, Turkey ceded to Russia the states of Akhaltsikh (formerly a province of Georgia) as well as the fortresses of Anapa and Poti with their respective coast lines.

Russia employed the next few years in campaigning against the various hill tribes and bringing them into subjection by means of small fortresses (Kreposts).

It is probable that the fifth war (1853) would have resulted in Russia's attaining her object, but powerful allies in the western Naval Powers would not suffer Constantinople, the key to the eastern Mediterranean Sea, to pass into Russian hands. Hence the Crimean War of 1854 and the forcing back of the Russian frontier over the mouths of the Danube and the lower Pruth.

Russia also lost the protectorate over the Danube principalities and the right to maintain naval arsenals on the coast of the Black Sea, a humiliating restriction being thus placed on her sovereignty. It was then that she really began that steadily pursued policy of expansion into Central Asia, which has been continued up to the present time and thus

it came about that these two ambitions—Constantinople and the great Eastern movement—became closely connected with one another.

It was then that she really began to consider the possibility of striking Great Britain in a vulnerable spot, (namely India) should it become necessary.

After the sixth Turkish War of 1877-1878, the Russian armies reached the very gates of Constantinople and it was mainly the Naval power of Great Britain that deprived them a second time of the fruits of their dearly-bought victory.

To this Russia replied by pushing her frontiers up to Kushk and Panjdeh (1879, 1880, 1884 and 1885) and far into the heart of the Pamirs (1891-1893) as already described.

The fact that Russia has acquired no further territory during the last 14 years may be attributed to her being obliged to utilise her available forces for the occupation of her Asiatic possessions. Lord Curzon has referred to the Russian forward movement as "Elementary with an absence of System" and Snessarev referring to the same, says:—

"We (Russians) began to penetrate into the continent of Asia from the West while Great Britain was entering it from the South about three centuries ago. Our forward movement was devoid of plan and ultimate aim and simply advanced where penetration was easiest. At first we moved quickly in

the Central Asian theatre, energetically and at full swing, worthy of a great country, but when Great Britain came in our way, we hung fire helplessly on the river Amu Daria. We gave way to Great Britain because we lacked a plan of action, a defined and independent political programme. Even now we lack a defined national programme, and had it not been so, we should have politically bested Great Britain and taken advantage of the recent South African War."

The Russian forward movement in Central Asia has halted since 1894, but it is my opinion, as before stated, that she is marking time so as to consolidate her dominions in the newly-acquired provinces of Central Asia and improve her relations with Persia and not so much because of Great Britain being athwart her path.

She has now reached the frontier of a consolidated state (Afghanistan) more capable of offering resistance than those she has hitherto subjected, and hence her further advance must necessarily be much slower than in the past.

Her present frontier line follows the Atrek river to Sarakhs and onwards to Kushk, thence up to the Oxus which it follows to the Pamirs whence it continues along the Thian Shan mountains.

The river Amu Daria can never be a scientific and ethnographical boundary for a great power.

On the other hand the ridges of the great Hindu Kush mountains would form an admirable one.

Whether the acquisition of the Hindu Kush as a boundary line will form one of Russia's projects in the future must depend on political events, but I consider it a very likely one in any case, and this is also the opinion of Messrs. Angus Hamilton and David Fraser, who have both visited all the strategic points of the Russian Central Asian Frontier. From her present Frontier to the Indus is not a great distance and the geographical obstacles likely to be encountered by Russia on her way thither are hardly greater than those offered by the Central Asian deserts which she finally overcame.

The Russian, in his policy with the Central Asiatics, is not overbearing and is satisfied with a recognition of his authority. He respects native religions and civil institutions as his own and what is more important, he does not inundate the country with imports and with traders and contractors who drain a new country and upset its conditions of production.

The population of Russian Turkestan is about $7\frac{1}{2}$ millions and is composed of various Aryan, Mongol and Turkish tribes, pure and half-caste.

The Kirghiz (of Mongol extraction), who lead a nomadic life, are the most numerous, as also the most reliable and peaceable, and form 30% of the total population.

The most important part of the population is that which inhabits the cultivated lower slopes of the mountains and fertile oases. It includes the

Usbeks, Tajiks, Sarts and Turkish and Aryan pure and half-caste tribes. The Sarts pursue trade and industry and the Tajiks agriculture. The Usbeks are still the predominating race in Bokhara and Khiva; they are in addition the most discontented and the least reliable.

The inhabitants of Trans-Caspia are mostly Turcomans (both nomadic and settled). A few Arabs, Hindus and Jews are also to be found in Russian Turkestan. There is a small percentage of heathen and about 2% of Russian immigrants, who are orthodox Greek Christians. The religion of the vast majority is however Mahomeddan and a fanatical appeal for the defence of Islam might easily unite all these races into religious frenzy against the Russians.

But the patience of the Russian with the adherents of Islam in religious matters reduces the likelihood of such a rising to a minimum.

The Khan of Khiva and the Ameer of Bokhara are little more than representatives of the Czar.

Russia represents these states abroad, directs their policies and has the right of maintaining garrisons therein and establishing means of communication. The Russian "Ak Pasha" (White Czar) exercises an extraordinary fascination for Asiatics of Eastern Afghanistan and India. There is indeed an Afghan legend of "Ak Pasha" invading India and Satan siding with England against Allah.

It may be gathered from the above that Russia's position and prestige amongst her Central Asian subjects rank very high and go far to consolidate her position there.

I must relegate to other chapters the discussion of the expressed opinions of leading Russians as to the probability and feasibility of an actual invasion of India by Russia and her probable manner of undertaking such a gigantic enterprise, should she deem the same to be a necessity to her own well-being in the future.

CHAPTER IV

**The Russian point of view as regards
an Advance on India.**

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The Russian point of view as regards an Advance on India.

THE leading men in Russia, as well as all their experts in Central Asian affairs, regard India as "The Achilles heel of Great Britain's might and the pledge of her fame."

They regard an invasion of India as a very remote contingency not dependent on the acquisition of India itself for Russia, but on serious political differences elsewhere, the most likely sphere of influence at the present time being Persia and the Persian Gulf.

In the long history of Russia's relations with Central Asia, India had, until the last century, only been looked on as a hazy and distant aim for commercial undertakings. But, in the nineteenth century, and more especially during the last 50 years, the political rivalry of Russia and Great Britain has made India Russia's solitary possible object of demonstration against Great Britain; India has become the only part of the world where Russia has any chance of inflicting a deadly blow on the world-wide might of Great Britain.

For this reason, India has been used latterly by Russia as an object of demonstration to balance the international equilibrium as far as she herself

and Great Britain were concerned. Although, in Russian opinion, an Invasion of India is regarded as a very remote contingency, nevertheless, should political events in other quarters of the globe render such an advance necessary, Russia must at least be prepared to prosecute this gigantic enterprise and, by thus consolidating her frontier with Persia, Afghanistan and India, render the commencement or offensive operations a comparatively easier task.

India's great vital importance to Great Britain has been previously discussed as well as her subtle bearing on International Politics, occupying as she does the unique position of being *ipso facto* the leading factor of the Central Asian Question.

Russia has therefore during the past fifty years, while prosecuting other schemes; such as her endeavours to reach the waters of the Mediterranean Sea, her expansion eastwards across China and her movement across Persia to the Persian Gulf, always continued her preparations, in view of dire necessity, for a campaign against India. It is true that all the great European Powers recognized, as early as the 18th century, that the most decisive blow could be struck at Great Britain in India. Mirabeau, in 1786, said: "Russian troops could make a timely invasion of India through Central Asia, and thus, by threatening Great Britain, would produce a complete revolution in European politics." Count Leo Tolstoi of Russia and other famous thinkers also prophesied a similar invasion.

Mr. Angus Hamilton is one of the few discerning Englishmen who, up to the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, had always regarded the prospects of a Russian attack on India in the near future as very remote. In this he was cordially supported by Mr. A.J. Balfour, late Conservative Prime Minister and present Leader of the Opposition in the British House of Commons, who also rigidly adhered to the Russian point of view.

Skrine, in his "*Heart of Asia*" ridicules the idea of many English people as to a clause in the will of Peter the Great urging the conquest of India. There was no real organized attempt made by either Alexis or Peter the Great to obtain a firm footing in Central and Southern Asia. Even Peter the Great's strenuous programme, as contained in his famous edict to Prince Tcherkasski, cannot be ascribed to other than commercial motives.

It is now just two hundred years ago since that great Russian Czar first cast his glance over the Caspian Sea towards Central Asia and conceived the project of establishing communication with India and partaking of her fabulous riches.

In 1791 another Russian Sovereign, Catherine II, formed a plan which was never carried out of advancing into India through Orenburg, Bokhara and Kabul.

To Napoleon may be attributed the inception of the Astrabad idea, which afterwards so influenced Sir Henry Rawlinson, K. C. B., in 1868, when he

handed a memorandum to the then Conservative Secretary of State for India, recommending the occupation of Quetta and the establishment of a residency at Kandahar in view of Russia's successes in the Central Asian Theatre.

The unsuccessful termination of Napoleon's Egyptian campaign which had India as its final aim, had made clear to him that, so long as Great Britain held the command of the sea, access to India by the Mediterranean Sea and Turkish territory was an impossibility. In 1799, after the defeat of the Russians in Batavia, Napoleon (then first French Consul), designed a campaign against India in conjunction with the Emperor Paul I. of Russia, having Astrabad as a base. Some say the Emperor Paul I. of Russia first proposed the idea to Napoleon. The object of this campaign was to drive the British completely out of India and to give France the trade predominance there. France and Russia were each to supply 35,000 men. Germany was to transport the French troops along the Danube into the Black Sea, whilst the Russians collected 25,000 regulars and 10,000 Cossacks at Astrakhan. From Astrakhan (on the Volga) the Russian troops were to be carried on boats to Astrabad which was to be the head-quarters of the allied armies. They were thence to march on Herat and Kandahar. From Kandahar to the Indus was assumed to be 45 days' march and the whole journey was planned to last four months, or, without forced marches, five months. Just as the

Russian troops were about to commence the campaign, the great genius of strategy, having further considered the difficulties, decided not to undertake such a hazardous enterprise.

The Emperor Paul however was not to be so easily daunted and on the 12th January, 1801, he sent orders to the Donsky Cossack "Ataman" (Chief), Orloff Denisoff, commanding him to move on India via Orenburg, Khiva, and Bokhara and thence to the Indus. Destiny nipped this foolhardy enterprise in the bud by decreeing the Emperor's death, just as the expedition of 22,500 men had reached Orenburg.

In 1808 Napoleon offered Alexander I. 50,000 men to advance through Constantinople and Asia Minor on India, but this advance, although approved by that Czar, was never carried out.

During the Crimean War, 1854, Russia first vividly realized how very necessary it was for her to be in a position to make armed demonstrations and, if vitally necessary, prosecute a campaign against India and, by thus continually causing Great Britain to imagine she was going to measure swords with her in India and attack her in this most vulnerable spot, ensure her demands being complied with in other regions of the globe and bid fair to equalize the political supremacy of the two great powers.

During the disturbances in Turkey in the seventies, Skobolev, then Governor of Ferghana

district (previously conquered by him), proposed to Kauffmann, Governor-General of Turkestan, a plan of campaign against India. An alliance was to be entered into with Afghanistan, Kabul was to be made the head-quarters and, after a rising had been set on foot in India, Afghan and Russian troops were to march in and take possession of the country. But the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78 obliged Russia to put forth all her energies against Turkey so that Skobolev's plan of action was never put into execution.

It was the hostile attitude of England before and at the Berlin Congress (after the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78) which first led to a real demonstration against India.* Three columns were despatched. The first, marching from the Amu Daria towards Charjui, was to be joined by the troops of the Trans-Caspian military district and was then to continue its march through Merv on Herat. The second column was to move from Samarkhand via Bokhara, Balkd and Bamian to Kabul, whilst the third was to set out from the Ferghana district and, crossing the Alai ridge, advance over the Pamirs towards Chitral and Kashmir in the direction of the Upper Indus. The total troops employed were about 20,000 in number and Russia can never have seriously contemplated reaching the Upper Indus with such a small expeditionary force. Nevertheless the British were, at that particular time, very nervous about India and, as the Afghans were then at war with England, there

* She had sent a contingent of Indian troops to Malta and collected a large fleet in the Mediterranean Sea.

was great danger of Russia obtaining a firm footing in Afghanistan. But the forward movement had hardly begun when it was terminated by the Berlin Treaty of Peace.

In these demonstrations (for they can never be classed as an intended invasion) Orenburg was to have been the base and camel transport was to have been used over the 750 to 900 miles of steppes and desert up to the bases on the middle of the Amu Daria and Samarkhand. As 10,400 camels were used by Russia in her Khivan expedition of 1839 where only 4,400 troops were set in motion, it is clear that, in 1878, with twice the length of desert to cross and about 5 times the number of troops, there could have been no thought of serious operations.

To-day, 25 years after the demonstration of 1878, the conditions are radically changed and Russia has established strong and well-appointed garrisons in the great oases on the further side of the desert. Railways now exist as far as the neighbourhood of possible points of departure of an expedition against India. (Tejend, Merv, Panjdeh, Kushk, the middle Amu Daria, from Charjui to Patta Kesar and Margilan). The line of communications of 1878 is shortened by 950 miles and Russian railways can bring up troops and material from Russia and the Caspian Sea, thus allowing of a very different Russian effort than heretofore.

As already mentioned the 200 mile railway extension—Merv to Kushk—was completed in 1898, and

the steamer system on the Amu Daria as far as the mouth of the Koksha provides further means of transport.

The road from Samarkhand to Termez was built in 1900-01 and in the near future a railway is to be expected. The cart track from Osh to the Pamirski Post in the Pamirs provides other communications. There is a fortress at Kushk and fortifications at Kerki, Termez and Pamirski Post to allow of a storage of supplies. Materials for the extension of the railway from Kushk, in case of war, have been collected there. On 30th March 1885 the Alikhanov Panjdeh incident occurred and very nearly flung Great Britain into war with Russia.* According to Russia, it would then have been possible to take Herat also ; but in 1887 the frontier was definitely fixed and the disputed territory allotted to Trans-Caspia.

Russia's action in 1839 when Vitkovitch was representing Russia, already described, can only be considered as intrigue wherein a plot to obtain Herat was also apparent, and in 1878 when General Stolyetoff arrived in Kabul, the Ameer Shere Ali of Afghanistan, in conversing with him, made use of the following characteristic words: "Have you not come to again bring fire into Afghanistan, as did Vitkovitch?"

* Gladstone's speech, proposing a vote of credit was made on the 27th April, 1885, and eleven millions sterling was voted by the House of Commons in one night.

It is apparent therefore that Englishmen cannot base their fears of an invasion of India by Russia in the near future on her operations and demonstrations against that country in the past.

Nor can it be said that Russia has made any recent extensive explorations. The most recent, already referred to, was that of Colonel Ionov in 1891. A comparison of explorations in the Central Asian Theatre, South of the Hindu Kush between Russia and Great Britain, clearly demonstrates the meagreness of those of the former. The British have, many times in the past, become convinced of the ignorance of Russia as regards Afghanistan and India. It is a well-known fact that, before the 1873 agreement, Prince Gortchakov, wishing to obtain some idea of the geographical locality between the Russian frontier and India, had to get one of Weller's maps from the Royal Geographical Society of London.

Not without satisfaction also did the British note the words of a Turkestan General in 1878, when ordered to make a demonstration on India with three bodies of troops: "We were neither acquainted with the locality through which we had to march nor with the people inhabiting the theatre of operations."

As a memoir of the Akhal Tepe Expedition in 1879, there is, in the Geok Tepe Museum, a British map, with corrections by M. D. Skobolev himself, which caustic tradition says was the best sample of map-drawing of the given locality to be found at

that time in the Russian army. Englishmen acknowledge that the blundering of Colonel Gromchevsky gave them Kandjut and that the affair at Soma Tasha, called forth a *rapprochement* between Afghanistan and England, resulting in the "Durand Agreement" of 1893, ceding to Great Britain the territory of the Suleiman Mountains.

Russians, when reviewing the foundations for Great Britain's dread of invasion in India, give many reasons for its groundlessness and for the futility of Russia's embarking on such an enterprise at the present time. Their reasons may be summed up as follows :

1. An invasion of India, at the present day, with the passes all watched and guarded, would be a very different undertaking to what it was during the time of Alexander the Great, Ughuz Khan, Tamerlane, Baber, etc.

2. The difficulties and expense of such a campaign would be enormous and seriously drain, if not annihilate, the resources of Russia.

3. Such a campaign would have to be preceded by a series of reconnaissances, explorations and descriptive works and would never be embarked on by Russia unless a successful issue could be looked on as a "foregone conclusion."

I am convinced in my own mind that, apart from political differences elsewhere, up to the time of the recent Russo-Japanese War, there had never

been any immediate likelihood of Russia's invading India. Now that, however, Russia has been temporarily foiled in her efforts to reach the Yellow Sea and connect up her possessions across the Far East, I consider an advance on India by Russia to be more likely than it has ever been before (although it is the opinion of the British public that Russia is done for, and that the recent Anglo-Russian Agreement in any case makes us secure as far as India is concerned). The future of the Central Asian Question now hinges on Russia's future primary designs. Is it to be another strenuous effort towards the Yellow Sea, another attempt to gain access to the Mediterranean, expansion across Persia and a railway to a port in the Gulf or an invasion of India? As before explained, a Russian port in the Gulf should be a *casus belli* and would then probably also mean an invasion of India, so that the latter two movements may be considered as belonging to the same category.

I consider that another effort to regain the entire supremacy of the Far East will still be Russia's primary aim, and the building of the Amur railway, already discussed, goes far to substantiate this statement.* Were Russia ever to invade India, it would be done solely to crush Great Britain's might and did she ever take possession of it it would only be to return the country again to the natives of India to "scramble for."

* As do also her designs in Chinese Turkestan and the proposed practical doubling of the Siberian Railway line.

Skrine, in his *Heart of Asia*, says: "It is only the moustacheless second-lieutenants in Russia who dream of a conquest of India." As before explained, Russia's internal policy in Central Asia is diametrically opposite to that of Great Britain and Alexander the Great, as she practically uses none of her Central Asian subjects in her fighting line although the hardy Tekins, who showed such bravery at the storming of Geok Tepe (1880) would make very useful troops and Turcoman cavalry would be very useful to Russia in a campaign against India.

Russians are very fond of comparing India to their own great country as regards bureaucracy, famines on economic grounds and the general poverty of the masses. They find a direct analogy between the natives of India and themselves in their softness and dreaminess of character, their lack of egotism and perseverance and their political weakness. They consider that the great mixture of races and number of castes in India constitute Great Britain's strength there as well as the fact that the natives regard Russia as personifying a most despotic and arbitrary Government with the executioner and the gallows as its principal symbols. They regard Afghanistan as a possible ally and consider that the Russian Government should be ready, in the future, to profit by internal quarrels and consequent chaos in Afghanistan. When referring to native troops Russians do so with great disdain quoting Warren's characteristic words: "It is incomprehensible what a magical effect European troops and bayonets

have on Asiatics. The bravest of them are of no use. They become like 'birds bewitched by snakes.'"

As illustrations of the hardiness and bravery of the Russian soldiers, I may cite Suvorov's Swiss campaign in 1799, the Russo-Turkish War of 1853, the Crimean War of 1854-55 and the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78.

When I was in Russia in 1904, it is true that an invasion of India, after the birth of the Tsarevitch, would have been then a very popular move. There were persistent rumours of Russian military activity in Central Asia and public feeling was then very much against Great Britain amongst all classes of society and a cessation of hostilities against Japan and a prosecution of an invasion of India were frequently discussed.† It is also true that the first troops sent out to the Russo-Japanese War were reserve troops, whilst their regular troops were kept in their garrisons (greatly increased) in Central Asia and elsewhere. Russian prestige was also at that time at a very low ebb and it was hoped that such action on the part of Russia would have increased it.

Sir Henry Cotton, K.C.S.I., M.P., in his recent book, "*New India or India in Transition*", says that Russo-phobists labour under a strange hallucination. He implicitly agrees with Snessarev and

* Those who know the soldiers of Northern India will realize what an erroneous statement this is.

† The prosecution of the war with Japan was a very unpopular move as far as the Russian public was concerned.

other Russian experts that any danger which may threaten Great Britain in India would not come from Russia or elsewhere, but from defects of internal policy or administration.

To conclude this chapter I cannot be better than refer to the convincing words of Krenitsin who, in his recent work, "*Flight of the Russian Eagle on India*," ably and emphatically sums up the Russian point of view as follows :

" We are not pursuing an aggressive policy in India nor do we seek any territorial possessions there. Were Great Britain to cease mixing herself up in our conflicts with Turkey and creating "cruces " in the Persian Question, nobody in Russia would ever refer to an invasion of India ; but, in view of other political differences, it is the only one spot where England's might is vulnerable by Russia. "

CHAPTER V

Description of Theatre of Operations.



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THE theatre of operations may be said to be bounded on the North by the Central Asian Railway line, on the East by the Chinese frontier and further by a line through Srinagar into Sirhind, on the South and South-east by a continuation of this line through Kelat to the Indus and along the Indus and Sutlej, and on the West by a line from Askabad through Meshed to Hamun Lake.

This large area may be divided into three zones lying at right angles to the line of advance.

- (1) Turanian Plateau along Central Asian Railway.
- (2) Central Asian Mountain Region.
- (3) Plateau of the Indus.

(1) The Turanian Plateau spreads out between the Ural River and Mountains on one side and the Central Asian and Persian frontier and mountains on the other. The Plateau is about 720 miles in diameter and consists of sandy deserts and steppes with a number of oases. Vegetation is meagre and water is brackish, but, after the rainy season, luxurious grass covers the hot desert steppes of the summer. The inhabitants are for the most part nomads and shepherds.

The larger oases are mostly situated near the mountains and have cultivated fields, orchards, etc., and fixed settlements, viz : Tejend, Merv, Panjdeh, Bokhara, Samarkhand, Khiva, Maimana, Shibarghan, Mazar-i-Sharif, Tashkent, Khojend and Khokand. Of rivers and streams only the Amu Daria and Syr Daria rivers are voluminous enough to reach the Sea of Aral.

Sometimes on the watercourses and irrigation canals inundations occur and epidemics of fever commit havoc amongst the population.

Of the oases Samarkhand and Bokhara are about the best and wheat, rice, cotton, vegetables, fruit and tobacco are grown. There is no trace of any wood.

The summer, from May to September, is very hot and rainless and the winter bitterly cold. Hence the best time for projected operations would be March to May.

(2) The Western half of the Central Asian mountain region, lying between the Chinese frontier and Iranian Plateau, extends into the theatre of operations.

The mountains under consideration thus consist of the Alai, Pamirs, Hindu Kush and their spurs, Karakorum and Western Himalayas, all of which are systems having some of the highest elevations on the world's surface.

The Alai mountains are a western continuation of the Thian Shan. They average 12,000 to 14,000 feet in height, but there are summits over 18,000. The passes lie at 11,000 to 13,000 feet above the sea-level, ascents and descents being equally steep. The passes connect ravine-like valleys and are difficult of passage.

At the springs of Zarafsdan, the Alai chain splits up into two ridges, the southern of which (Karategin) is the higher, wider and more inaccessible. Its height is 14,000 feet and south of Samarkhand its spurs are still 1,600 feet above the surrounding country.

In 1896 a cartographical survey was made of this country, and it was found that even the passes in the two western branches of the chain lie at 12,500 feet above the sea-level and are barely practicable for mountain ponies, many being covered with barren rocks and perennial snow. In these parts, as in the Pamirs, the winter is intensely cold and lasts six to seven months. Frequent sudden snowstorms and avalanches make marches very perilous. Sven Hedin, at the end of February and the beginning of March 1894, crossed the Tengis Bay Pass, the Alai valley and the Kizil in the face of many difficulties and dangers. There is a road over the Alai mountains, built in 1892-93, practicable for carts. It is 9 feet wide and, commencing at Gulcha, crosses the Taldik Pass at 11,600 feet.

The Alai mountains, therefore, with their western continuation, form a 300 mile long mountain

wall, practically only crossable in one place by an engineered road, and consequently are a formidable barrier to an advance in large bodies from the Ferghana Regions across the Pamirs towards the Upper Indus.

After crossing the Alai mountains towards the South, the broad valley of the Upper Vaksh * (also Alai Valley, about 8,900 to 9,100 feet high) is reached, after which comes Transalai, a lofty chain reckoned as part of the Pamirs. This latter chain forms the northern edge of the Pamir Plateau and, though higher than the Alai, its height above the surrounding valleys is less. Its highest peak is on Russian territory (Peak Kauffmann, over 22,900 feet). The snow-line seems to lie at about 13,000 feet above the sea-level.

The Pamirs is a term given to a system of high-lying valleys and mountain ridges extending from East to West and North to South for a width of about 180 miles. They may be regarded as the radiating point of the high Asiatic mountains (Thian Shan, Karakorum, Himalayas and Hindu Kush). They form a plateau, about 9,800 feet high, from 3,000 to 9,000 feet above which rise chains of mountains. To the East and centre, the valleys are 11,600 to 13,800 feet high and only in the West do they sink as low as 8,000 feet. The central mountain ridges running Westwards between the high valleys are lower than the marginal chains

* Waksh or Surkhab.

(North, East and South) which latter reach 20,000 feet in height.

The Pamirs are bounded on the North by the Upper Vaksh (or Kizil Su), on the West by the Panjah River, (name given to the Amu Daria from the Sar-i-kul lake to Kala-i-Wamar) on the South by the Hindu Kush and on the East by the Sar-i-koc mountains which run along the Chinese frontier.

The Pamirs are held by most authorities to be inaccessible to large bodies of troops owing to their extent, barrenness, severe climate, rarified atmosphere and the height of their system above the sea-level.

There is a great lack of roads and the very indifferent tracks are even difficult for pack animals.

Grass is to be found in the high valleys during the three or four summer months, but there are no trees. Up to a height of 10,500, there are small fields of corn and poplars, and fruit trees are to be found along the Lower Murghub and Panjah (9,800 feet). Cattle-breeding appears to be the principal occupation of the small nomad population.

Sven Hedin crossed the Pamirs during the second half of winter (February and March) in 1894. Russian detachments repeatedly successfully crossed them in June and July, 1901.

Colonel Ionov crossed from Margilan to the Baroghil Pass with 1 battalion of infantry, 3 sotnias (squadrons) of Cossacks, 2 sections of artillery and a baggage train.

At Pamirski Post, in the heart of the Pamirs (about 12,000 feet high) is stationed a Russian detachment of about 130 men. This post is connected with Margilan by a track for supplies which are arranged for by a native Kirghiz. In the summer of 1897, the line of communications was continued across the Alai valley, the Kizil Mountains (13,000 feet) and Ak Baikol Pass (14,000 feet) right up to the Pamirski Post. The road recently made has a width of 9 feet 2 inches, with maximum gradients of one in ten and is probably practicable for carts. Other lines of communication are only inferior tracks. The crossing of the Pamirs would be a fifteen to twenty days march. Referring to the Pamirs, Holdich, says: "Between these passes (Hindu Kush) and Russia, we have interposeh a narrow Afghan barrier but, even without that barrier, there is no possibility of any dangerous aggression on the part of Russia, for no military force of any consequence ever did or ever can get through. Between Russia and China, the Sir-i-kol range which strikes northwards from the Mustagh (due north of Hunza) forms a splendid natural barrier, though not insuperable. This region, now Chinese, Russia might occupy, but she could not possibly approach India, for, to the South of her, she would still have the gigantic peaks of the Mustagh,

a barrier that no living European has ever crossed except Younghusband. Hence, from a military point of view, the Pamirs may be placed outside the pale of strategical consideration."

After crossing the southern limits of the Pamirs (Panjah or Wakhan Daria) the Hindu Kush range is reached. This mountain range forms an unbreakable barrier, shutting in the North of India, and the few passes leading from the Pamirs are impossible for wheeled transport or artillery.

The range begins at the sources of the Wakhan Su and Yarkand and follows the former and the Panjah River as far as the bend to the North from Ishkashim. Thence it takes a South-westerly direction to the Haji-gak Pass and then, broadening out with several spurs, under the names of Koh-i-baba, Sufed Koh and Siah Koh, it extends to the Persian frontier. The Hindu Kush along the Wakhan district and Panjah river forms an unbroken high mountain chain, about 24 miles broad. This chain is about 6,500 feet above the surrounding country and 20,000 feet (in a few places 22,500) above the sea-level. Passes average from 11,000 to 16,000 feet high and are below and on the perpetual snowline. The winter lasts 5 to 6 months and is very vigorous with much snow and frequent storms. From the bend of the Panjah river the system becomes broader and lower, but, even in this locality, the ridge is covered with perpetual snow and passes average from 13,000 to 16,000 feet high.

The Koh-i-baba finally ends in a number of chains which go on decreasing in height, extending across the line of communication, Herat-Farah-Kandahar.

The Hindu Kush and Koh-i-baba separate North Afghanistan from the main part of that country and its defence is thus rendered more difficult.

The principal passes of the Eastern Hindu Kush are :

- (1) The Kilik (Hunsa outposts)
- (2) The Baroghil (Gilgit).
- (3) The Dorah * (Chitral).
- (4) The Nuksan.

There are many passes (8—10) in the Eastern Hindu Kush and the country as far as the Dorah Pass is fairly well-known. Caravans traverse the passes from Wakhan and the Panjah Valley into the high mountain valleys of Gilgit and Chitral which are furnished with better paths. Descents towards the South are very steep.

From the Dorah Pass South-westwards (the Western Hindu Kush) extends a practically unknown and very little visited country which is presumably most inhospitable and from the main ridge of the mountain chain run out lofty transverse ranges between which are narrow rocky ravines without any means of communication. From the Valleys of the Upper Kunduz and Balkh rivers exist some 10 or 12

* Colonel Hanna considers the Dorah Pass to be the only practicable one and states that not more than 300 men could cross it in one day and that for only 3 to 4 months in the year.

paths leading over passes (11,500 to 12,800 feet high) into the district of Kohistan and on to Kabul. Over this wild mountainous country, which has to be crossed, after the main ridge of the Hindu Kush, by an army invading from the North, the best passes are probably the Hajigak Pass (12,100 feet) and thence by the Unai Pass (10,900 feet) to Kabul (9,000 feet and a pass N. E. of the Hajigak named the Irak Pass.

An army using the Hajigak Pass would traverse the main ridge of the Westerly Hindu Kush by the Bamian Pass (9,100 feet). The principal passes of this main ridge are :

- (1) Khawak.
- (2) Tilak.
- (3) Bazarak.
- (4) Shibar.
- (5) Bamian.
- (6) Malakand.

The Hajigak Pass is a much frequented track lying on the direct line from the Bamian to Kabul. It is the easiest line of communication from the middle Amu Daria to the Kabul and Indus valleys and could probably be made practicable for guns as far as the Bamian. The road runs from Balkh to Mazar-i-Sharif and thence to Tashkurghan, Hajigak and Unai Passes to Kabul. From the northern slopes of the mountains exist little-used tracks over passes 12,000 to 14,000 feet high and the best route in this direction would lead from Kunduz along the Kunduz valley by the Kaoshan Pass to Charikar on

the Panjshir river, where the tracks unite and go on to Kabul. The lack of resources in this direction would render the supply question very difficult. *

From the Bamian locality of the Hindu Kush follows a chain greatly wanting in facilities of crossing, namely, the Koh-i-Baba with its westerly and southerly offshoots. This range, though lower than the Hindu Kush, equals the Alps in height. The offshoots running West, namely, the Band-i-Turkestan, Sufed Koh and Siah Koh are steep, jagged ridges, not crossed by a single line of communication (North to South) for their entire length up to Merv-Kushk-Herat-Farah road (i.e., for 240 miles). The reason for this is, doubtless, the tremendous breadth of this system of parallel ranges which, from the line, Shibarghan-Maimana-Maruchak at the foot of the northern slope, to the line Farah-Girishk on the southern slope, measures about 240 miles in breadth. West of the road Kushk-Herat-Sabzawar-Farah, the height of these spurs decreases rapidly. Nevertheless the road between Kushk and Sabzawar reaches 4,800 to 6,000 feet above the sea-level, the great relative height of the surrounding country (Herat 3,000 feet, Sabzawar 3,200 feet) diminishing its difficulty.

The southern slopes of the branches Sufed Koh and Siah Koh are absolutely without cultivation, deserted and covered with rocks.

*I may mention that this was the route I proposed to follow when I applied, about a year ago, to return home from India via Afghanistan and the Russian railways. My request was not, however, granted by the Government of India.

The rivers running down at right angles to and from the northern branch (Band-i-Turkestan) flow in well-cultivated valleys with healthy climate.

The valleys of the Murghub, Hari Rud and Helmund, running W. and S.-W., whilst still among the high mountains, are less cultivated and populous.

The middle river valleys on the line Herat. Farah-Kandahar are well cultivated and Herat district is plentiful in corn and cattle.

Herat, as far back as 1838, was referred to by Sir John McNiell in a letter to Lord Palmerston, (written from Meshed) as "The Key of all northern Afghanistan" and he also stated in the same letter that there was no impediment to the march of an army on Herat as Count Simonitch had driven his carriage from Teheran to Herat.

Herat is one of the hearts of Asiatic life and roads lead thence everywhere (Moscow, Calcutta, Peking and the shores of the China Seas). Herat and Meshed are the chief markets for all the produce of the Har-i-Rud valley and of the fertile province of Khorassan. As already referred to, the exports from Khorassan to the Central Asian Railway are constantly increasing, and the yearly surplus production of cereals probably exceeds 1,000 tons of wheat and barley, respectively. There are about 25 head of oxen per square kilometre.

The direction of this trade facilitates Russian exploitation of Khorassan's resources.

According to Russian and British estimates, the valley of the Har-i-Rud could sustain an army of a moderate size for a lengthy period of time. (During the last siege of Herat, 40,000 Persians lived on the country). Indeed, the Herat district is considered by most authorities to be "The Granary of Afghanistan." Means of transport would be a difficult question; but the hardy Caucasian ponies could be made use of and the resources of Turkestan tapped in this respect.

It is possible that a very large invading army would, probably, have to be at first mainly dependent on its line of communication for supplies.

From Russian Turkestan, there exists from Bokhara to Merv one of the chief trade routes to Central Asia.

Merv is 400 miles from Samarkhand and from Merv the road to Herat runs along the Murghub Valley. The Russian railway was extended as far as Kushk in 1904.

Kushk is very unhealthy, jaundice and malaria being very prevalent. The latter is probably of a more malignant type in these regions than in the Panjab Valley.

Added to this the water of the locality Kushk-Herat is said to be full of magnesia, causing severe diarrhœa.

Materials for a light field railway are stored at Kushk and the construction of a railway would ensure supplies being forthcoming up to and beyond Herat (say to Shabed-Sarai). The Hari-Rud River is spanned by a single arch stone bridge S. of Herat. The principal difficulties in the face of a further advance on Kandahar would be occasioned by the supply question, scarcity of transport and geographical conditions.

The districts Sabzawar, Farah and Girishk are thinly populated and little cultivated. There are only miserable villages devoid of resources where in summer-time there is little water.

Considerable regions are of a steppe-like nature and it is only on nearing Kandahar, when the Helmund river is reached, that the country becomes more prosperous. The Helmund Valley is very fertile near the river banks and would probably support a large army. Boulger refers to this locality as the "principal granary of Afghanistan." But South of the irrigated regions along the Helmund Valley is open desert of sand and scrub and a large Russian army might have to rely to a certain extent for supplies on its line of communications' railway.

Kandahar has a population of 25,000 and is situated 360 miles from Herat. As before mentioned the construction of a railway branching off from the Central Asian line to Meshed-Birjand and Nasratabad would enormously assist the advance to Kandahar.

Kandahar is considered the "Metz of India" and there are three roads thither, viz.: via Farah, Daulatabad and further North through Kala-Yar-Mahomed.

The Farah road is the best and from Farah to Girishk across the Kash Rud and Bakwa valleys there is plenty of water right to Kandahar.

There is a road from Farah through Nushki to Kelat, described by Captain Christie as of no use for a large army, but considered by Monsieur Ferrier as quite possible for the movement along it of large bodies of troops. By this road Herat is under 600 miles from Kelat whence by the Mulla Pass (easier than the Bolan, and supposed to have been used by Krateros, one of Alexander the Great's Generals) the Indian frontier could be reached.

It would seem that the difficulties of a Russian advance by the Herat-Farah-Kandahar route are no greater than the advance from Scinde on Kandahar performed three times by British armies. The Seistan or Persian Gulf routes will only be possible to Russia when her power is dominant in Ispahan and Shiraz and she has a port on the Persian Gulf.

N. E. of the Irak Pass (this Pass is N. E. of the Hajigak Pass) another high ridge branches off from the Hindu Kush, soon breaking up into a series of low chains filling the entire S. E. of Afghanistan. The best known of these mountains are the Sufed Koh running East and the ranges of the Suleimans

running South and South-West. They are all bare, rugged mountains similar to the Balkans and the valleys are high lying, deserted and poor in water. Only the deeper valleys are cultivated along the river banks.

Between the middle Hindu Kush and the Kunar river (also called the Chitral river) there lies the broken, wild, roadless high mountain land of Chitral, which is only inhabited in the valleys, which are often nothing more than absolute ravines. Along these narrow valleys European cereals, Indian corn and sub-tropical fruits are cultivated. Higher up only pasture land exists which is grazed by good herds in summer.

East of the Kunar, between the Kunar and the Indus, begin the high ranges of the Himalayas, which in some places rise up to 20,000 feet, exceptional peaks being as much as 26,000 feet above the sea level, and resemble in formation the mountains of Chitral.

Hence, from a military point of view, the Hindu Kush may be defined (with its offshoots) as a barrier of high mountains, 650 miles in length and 24 to 120 miles in breadth as far as the Hajigak Pass, from which Pass westwards it is 180 to 240 miles broad.

This barrier cuts all lines of communications from the Central Asian Railway to the Indus. The severe climate, lack of resources, want of roads,

height of the passes and width of the system render the employment of large forces extremely difficult and would appear to limit the same to three directions according to the British point of view and to four directions according to Russian opinions.

The following are the directions feasible :—

- (a) The route from the valleys of Balkh and Khulm (i. e., the river rising at Kara Kotal and terminating in the oasis of Tashkurgan) through the Bamian and Hajigak Passes and on to Kabul, via the Unai Pass. Here the cultivated river valleys run deep into the mountains on both slopes and a better track crosses the range. In this case Bokhara or Samarkand would be the base, with the Amu Daria as an advanced base.
- (b) The route from Kushk over Hazrat-i-baba Pass, Herat, the Shahbed-Sarai Pass, Sabzawar, Farah to Kandahar where continuous tracks connect the wealthier regions, between the spurs of the mountains and on the West and South-west edges of the hill zone.
- (c) The third route would be what is termed by Russians the Ferghana route by the passes Baroghil, Dorah or Nuksan on Gilgit or Chitral, which is regarded as impossible by the British. In this

case Faizabad, the capital of the Badakshan country, would probably be used as an advanced base, Kulab being the base.

- (d) There would also be a fourth route, alternative to (a), from Merv to Herat and across N. Afghanistan to Kabul.

The Suleiman Mountains form the great physical barrier between India and Afghanistan. They dominate the Indian frontier from the Gomal river to the latitude of Quetta. The whole country to the West of this mountain line presents the aspect of a gridiron of stupendous ridges and furrows, range after range of remarkable parallelism intervening between it and Afghanistan. These ranges, combined with the general barren state of the country, form a series of obstacles of great difficulty which it would therefore be necessary to turn, either to the North or the South.

On the East of the Suleimans lie fertile plains descending to the Indus North of the Gomal river, but, further South, wastes of sandy desert intervene between the mountains and the river, constituting a further obstacle, supported by the Indus itself, to an advance from the West by the Bolan route.

The chief passes from India to Afghanistan are :—

- (1) The Khyber (Peshawar to Kabul).
- (2) The Kurram to Kabul S. of the Sufed Kohor to Ghazni).

(3) The Gomal (to Ghazni).

This pass was frequently used by invaders in the past.

(4) The Bolan (to Kandahar).

(5) Khojak pass and tunnel.

There is also another important pass, the Mulla Pass, which was used in the past, according to Holdich, by Krateros.

The Kyber is the most northerly pass, the Kurram and the Gomal forming the intermediate military and commercial routes, whilst the Bolan is the great southern passage for war and commerce. The Khyber commences at Jamrud (West of Peshawar), winds through the hills for 33 miles in a north-westerly direction and debouches at Dacca. It rises gradually from the East, but has a deep declivity towards Afghanistan.

At Ali Musjid the pass lies up the bed of a torrent with perpendicular and quite impossible walls of rock on both sides. Near Lundi Kotal the gorge is narrow, rugged and steep with a slatebed, on which guns could be with difficulty drawn by horses.

The pass can be turned to the North and South and it was by a north-easterly hill track that Nadirshah marched his invading army into India in 1738 A. D. These detours have now all been blocked by forts before debouching on Peshawar. In places

the narrow ravines of the Khyber Pass are only 50 feet wide with almost perpendicular walls of rock, 1,300 to 1,600 feet high, on either side. In between these ravines occur stretches of more open valley from 2,000 to 3,000 feet long.

There are in this long defile three barrier forts, which, defended poorly in 1897 by the Khyber Rifles, were taken by the Afridis. It was in this Pass that the Afghan troops held the Indian troops at bay in 1878 and were only made to retreat by a great turning movement to the North. Ali Musjid, the huge mass of rock commanding all communications, lies about 10 miles from the Eastern extremity of the Pass. The Pass is defended by the Khyber Rifles (a sort of tribal Militia officered by British Officers and recently re-organized and increased).

The Bolan Pass is a narrow precipitous gorge, followed by a military road and railway, 56 miles long. It rises in a succession of narrow valleys between high ranges until it culminates in a broad plain. The top of the Pass is 8,500 feet and the gradient 90 feet in the mile.

The Bolan river, flowing along the whole length of the Pass, is subject to sudden floods, and in 1841 a British force was destroyed by one of these. The Western end is very narrow and could easily be held against immensely superior forces.

Professor Krenitsin, late of the Russian General Staff, referring to the Khyber and Bolan passes, says :

"One must be full of daring to decide to march through such chinks."

There is little fear of the success of a turning movement to the East. Only the North-western portions of the Himalayas and Karakorum Mountains come into the theatre of operations described above. The prolongation of the Himalayas, S. E. of the Indus gap, as well as the Karakorum chain starting from the South-eastern corner of the Pamirs, contain some of the highest summits in the world. The height of the ridge (16,500 feet to 23,000 feet), the enormous glaciers, the high passes which in the Karakorum Mountains attain 16,500 feet in perpetual snow, their width, (from the Pamir Plateau to Srinagar is 210 miles in a straight line) the absence of inhabitants and the lack of roads, not to mention the fact that in front of them lie the Pamirs themselves, render operations of even small bodies practically impossible and in any case confine them to a few valleys for only a short period of the summer. From June to October (four months), according to Captain Godfrey, passes are crossable by troops and pack animals, but guides with a thorough knowledge must be selected and the time of crossing chosen.

On the S. W. border of the Central Asian mountains on the further side (S.W. and S.) of the Herat-Kandahar road, there extends a high table land comprising S. W. Afghanistan, E. Persia and Baluchistan. It slopes off towards the East and South and contains various mountain chains running in different

directions, covered with rocky desert. It contains also a few moderately deep depressions with shallow marshy lakes, such as the Hamun lake, receiving the water running off the mountain slopes. Cultivated land only exists along the Herat-Kandahar road in the hollows of the rivers, in the N. E. frontier strip of Persia within the mountain valleys, by the shores of the Hamun lake and in the mountainous chains running past Kelat towards the South. The entire tableland lying between is salt steppe and sandy desert destitute of water and vegetation. The tableland drops finally down to a hot, dry strip of country, 60 to 90 miles wide, running parallel to the coast.

In the village oases dates and a small supply of corn are obtainable. Thus S. and S. W. of the road Herat-Kandahar lies a region difficult for big operations.

The low-lying depression of the Indus (Indus Plateau) lies to the S.E. and S. of the Central Asian mountain system and is almost flat country. (Jhelum 900 feet, Lahore 800 feet, Dera Ismail Khan 620 feet and Dera Ghazi Khan 460 feet high).

It is only of equal fertility with the Ganges basin in the parts bordering on that basin, viz.: Sirhind along the Upper Beas and Ravee and in the N. and N.-W. borderland of the Himalayas and Sufed Koh. Here, as also along the Indus and its tributaries, are towns, villages and good communications. The

road system is well-developed in Sirhind and along the river banks. The greater part of the Punjaub, (that is the country between the Indus and the Sutlej, or more properly the country drained by the Indus) as well as the greater part of the country on the right bank of the Indus, (Dera Ismail Khan, etc.) is a dry, reddish-brown plain, only covered with verdure during and immediately after the rainy season.

South-east of the lower course of the Sutlej the Punjaub becomes an absolutely sterile, waterless, salt region, similar to the Central Asian desert. This Indian desert, called Rajputana or Tar, extends from the railway Rewari-Lahore right to the sea and to the marshy depression (Rann of Cutch) east of the mouths of the Indus and divides by its width (120 to 220 miles) the lower and middle Indus from the rich interior of Upper India. Hence the basin of the Indus, from a military point of view, may be divided into two sections:—

(1) The vicinity of the Indus and the Upper Punjaub and Sirhind where favourable conditions prevail for the movement of large forces.

(2) The Lower Punjaub and desert to the South-east where operations on a large scale are very difficult and at times impossible owing to the character of the country.

Communications on the Turanian Plateau may be classed under two heads:—

(1) Along the cultivated and inhabited banks of the rivers (local and through trade traffic) coincid-

ing with the feasible line of operations against the Indus.

(2) Cross-communications between oases (for trade purposes).

Within the Central Asian mountain region there is one main direction, linking deep valleys across the mountains and corresponding with the line of operations of an army, adopting this direction. In the Indus Basin communications are favourable throughout.

On the Turanian Plateau, roads, with the exception of short stretches of Russian-built ones, consist of only caravan tracks leading from spring to spring and difficult to follow.

Within the Central Asian mountain region are cart and bridle tracks.

On the Russian side cart roads exist from Osh to Gulcha over the Taldik Pass from Kisilart to Pamirski Post, and there is an excellent military road from Samarkhand to Termez.

On the Indian side, the British have built or improved many roads, of which some of the most important are :—

(1) Srinagar, Gilgit, Yassin.

(2) Peshawar, Mianwala, Panjkora, Dir (good camel track), Kila Drosh, Chitral (good bridle path).

(3) Rawalpindi, Khushalgarh, Kohat, Thal, Parachinar (engineered cart road and railway).

(4) Kohat to Bannu (Edwardesabad) and on to the Tochi valley.

(5) Thal, Bannu, Gwaleri Pass.

(6) Dera Ismail Khan, Gwaleri Pass, Zermelan, Ghazni (camel track).

(7) Dera Ghazi Khan, Pishin, Chaman, Kandahar (engineered cart road).

(8) Peshawar, Khyber Pass, Jalalabad, Kabul (not metalled but a good road).

(9) Road and railway Nowshera to Dargai and road thence to Chitral.

(10) Road and railway Quetta to Nushki.

Of natural roads, originating out of traffic, the principal are:—

(1) Osh, Andijan, Khokand, Khojend, Uratube,

(2) Faizabad (near the Vaksh), Shirabad, Mazar-i-Sharif, Tashkurgan, Bamian.

(3) Faizabad (on the Koksha), Kunduz, Tashkurgan, Balkh, Shibarghan, Maimana, Herat.

(4) Merv, Panjdeh, Kushk, Herat, Farah, Kandahar.

(5) Farah, Nushki, Kelat.

(6) Samarkhand, Bokhara, Merv.

(7) Merv, Sarakhs, Kungruela, Kuchan, Herat.

(8) Askabad, Meshed, Herat, Kandahar.

(9) Kandahar, Ghazni, Kabul.

(10) Gwaleri Pass to Pishin.

(11) Pishin to Ghazni.

(12) From Datta Khol, the furthest post in the Tochi valley, there is a track leading to Ghazni.

According to Russia, the road Kushk-Herat is practicable for carts.

The road on the W. bank of the Murghub, leading from Panjdeh towards the western frontier, is not connected with that leading from Herat to Maimana across the frontier.

It is probable that not a single one of the lines of communication across the main ridge of the Central Asian Mountains is practicable for carts (i.e., only pack animals could be used as transport). The best road is, of course, the one from Tashkurgan through Bamian and across Hajigak Pass as far as the foot of Unai Pass. Along this road it might be possible to move Field Artillery, if required.

In the Indus Basin are many cart roads and caravan tracks.

On the Russian side of the theatre of operations exist several good railways, already discussed and enumerated. They are as follows :—

(1) The Trans-Caspian Railway from Krasnovodsk, via Geok Tepe, Askabad, Merv, Bokhara, Samarkhand, Khojend, to Andijan.

(2) The Central-Asian railway from Samara, (on the Volga) via Orenburg, Kazalinsk, Chimkent, Tashkent to Khojend, thus the above two railways connect at Khojend. *

* The actual junction of the two Railways is about 50 miles W. of Khojend, just North of Uratube.

(3) Russia's Siberian railway — Moscow — Samara — Omsk — Tomsk — Irkutsk and on through Manchuria to Vladivostock. The part of the Siberian-Manchurian railway from Harbin to Port Arthur was given up, as before explained, after the recent Russo-Japanese War. Russia has under consideration a scheme for practically doubling the Siberian Railway from the Urals to Kansk, viz. a short length of line, now existing between Cheliabinsk, Ekaterinburg and Tuimen, is to be prolonged to Omsk. The line is to be doubled from Omsk to Tomsk, thus leaving only 1,000 miles of single track between European Russia and Irkutsk. Of the latter it is proposed to double gradually the distance Tomsk to Kansk, the remaining 600 miles to Irkutsk being left a single track at present. The Siberian Manchurian Railway is also known as the Eastern Chinese Railway.

(4) The 200 mile Merv-Kushk extension railway.

(5) A railway is projected from Samarkhand to Termez.

(6) It is also intended by Russia to join the Central Asian and Siberian railways, viz. Tomsk, Semipalatinsk, Chimkent, Tashkent.

(7) The Amur Railway. I have already mentioned this railway. On reference being made to the map published with this book, illustrating the Far East country, it will be seen that a line runs at present almost due North from Vladivostock to Khabarovsk (printed on the map Khabarovka) on

the Amur River, whilst to the West there is a short branch thrust out East of Lake Baikal from Kaidolo on the Siberian Railway to Nertchinsk. From Nertchinsk to Khabarovsk there is no communication except by road and river.

The waterway is a magnificent one, but is closed during the winter, and, moreover, the mouth of the river is commanded by the Japanese on their half of Saghalien.

“ The presence of the smallest hostile gunboat squadron at the river mouth even to-day, ” writes Mr. Putnam Weale in his latest book on the Far East, “ would paralyse the whole great waterway and disorganize the shipping, which alone gives life and blood to the little group of river settlements.”

The Amur Railway would appear to be absolutely indispensable unless Russia is to hold the Amur Province only at the good will of Japan. The building of the line might take five years as there are enormous difficulties and many bridges would be necessary. Such a railway would also subject most of Manchuria to Russian influence.

- (8) The Russian railways projected in Persia— Meshed-Birjand-Nasratabad and the Bunder Abbas Railway—have already been fully dealt with.
- (9) The Alexand-Eropolrivan-Julfa Railway has now been completed.
- (10) Batum-Tiflis-Baku.
- (11) Tiflis-Erivan.

According to the latest Russian Railway timetables, there is a regular daily service of three trains to and fro from Tiflis to Batum. There are also three local trains in addition each way, not running through. The through journey takes about 10 hours (327 versts or 245 miles). Three trains run daily to and fro from Tiflis to Baku and the journey occupies about 14 hours (515 versts or 390 miles). From Baku to Batum is 842 versts (about 635 miles). From Batum to Odessa takes 77 hours by steamer.

On the Tiflis-Erivan Railway three trains also run to and fro daily, the journey occupying about 18 hours (352 versts or 264 miles). On the Trans-Caspian Railway two through trains run daily each way and the journey from Krasnovodsk to Merv takes about 48 hours (842 versts or about 632 miles). From Krasnovodsk to Tashkent is 1,748 versts (about 1,318 miles) and takes about 71 hours by train. Merv to Kushk is 294 versts (about 220 miles) and one train runs to and fro daily, taking about 12 hours to complete the distance.

On the Central Asian Railway (Samara-Orenburg-Tashkent) two trains run through, to and fro, daily, taking 68 to 86 hours to do the distance (2,090 versts or 1,570 miles). Tashkent is 3,210 versts (about 2,500 miles) from Moscow. A short time ago the St. Petersburg papers stated that a party of Russian engineers were leaving Moscow to make a survey of the railway line Kushk-Herat. Herat is about 67 miles from Kushk.

On the Trans-Caspian and Central-Asian railways, stations average 12 to 18 miles apart. The rolling stock on these railways was recently largely increased and it is probable that five trains could easily be run to and fro daily, did the necessity arise. These railways are at present single line. A new bridge has been built over the Amu Daria and railway works and schools have been instituted.

Naphtha is used as fuel; the water supply is difficult and has, on certain sections, to be conveyed on the train. Precautions are taken against spying and no one may alight at Merv without permission. Kushk may only be visited by permission from some high authority.

The German railway Baghdad to Koweit, which will probably have a very important bearing on the Central-Asian question, has already been fully discussed.

Of Anglo-Indian railways there are many and the system is particularly good and well arranged.

Those particularly connected with the theatre of operations are the following :—

- (1) Umballa, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Attock—soon to be doubled between Amritsar and Umballa-Peshawar, Jamrud (double line).
- (2) Nowshera-Dargai, (single light railway)—soon to be converted to standard gauge. Nowshera commands the railway bridge over the Kabul river.

- (3) Rewari, Raewind, Mahmud Kot, Kuraishi,
(near Dera Ghasi Khan) Darya Khan,
(near Dera Ismail Khan) Khushalgarh.
- (4) Rewari, Raewind, Multan, Sukhur, Hyderabad,
(Scinde) Karachi.
- (5) Sukhur, Sibi, Quetta, Now Chaman (called
the Scinde-Pishin Railway).
- (6) Quetta-Nushki.

Of the above (3) and (4) are double line. (5) is a light single loop railway. (6) is as single light railway.

- (7) Rawalpindi—Khushalgarh—Kohat—Thal
—Parachinar.

From Khushalgarh this latter railway is a light frontier one.

There is now a magnificent cantilever bridge over the Indus at Khushalgarh replacing the former pontoon bridge.

The frontier railways were only started after the 1897 Tirah Expedition and have been of very great use.

Of projected railways I may mention the following:—

- (1) Along the Kabul river from Peshawar.
- (2) From Abbottabad to the confines of
Kashmir.
- (3) From Chaman to Kandahar.
- (4) From Nushki to Seistan.

The Kabul river railway will probably go to Lalpura, north of Dacca. The Khan of Lalpura used to get an allowance from the British Government, but now gets Rs. 12,000 annually from the Ameer of Afghanistan.

There are railway bridges at Attock and Sukhur, the former suitable for wheeled traffic, and pontoon bridges at Kala Bagh and Dera Ghazi Khan. At high water the latter have to be broken up.

There are numerous ferry boats and steam ferries on the Indus.

All the above railways are connected with the great network of Indian Railways.

The Scinde-Pishin Railway (3) crosses the Indian frontier, dividing at Sibi junction into two branches, the northern of which runs via Harnai into the Pishin valley, whilst the southern passes through Mushkaf and the Bolan to Quetta, where it reunites with the northern line. Hence it is termed the Harnai-Pishin loop line.

The question of having a direct Railway line from India to Europe and thus accelerating the Indian Mail Service and bringing this possession within easier reach of the Mother-country has been frequently discussed, and, as before mentioned, Germany, in 1903, wished England to participate in the Baghdad-Koweit Railway scheme with this supposed object.

The recent Anglo-Russian agreement has again induced the British Press to discuss the matter afresh. By this agreement Russia binds herself to consider Afghanistan outside her sphere of influence, but very little weight must be attached to this first article, as Russia has made similar promises for the past 30 to 40 years.

Sir Thomas Holdich, who discussed the matter of a Russo-Indian Railway with Mon. Paul Lessar, the great Russian engineer, in 1907, had all his arguments against the scheme shattered by the Russian expert, who contended that the vast increase of trade and commerce benefitting Russia, Great Britain and all Europe outweighed every other disadvantage. It seems to me, however, that such a railway would place us at a serious strategic disadvantage. Sir Thomas Holdich, after his discussion of the matter with the Russian engineer, wrote to the "Morning Post" (5th November, 1907) pointing out that military considerations have never permanently abridged the way of commercial progress and contended that the existence of the Railway would be of as great advantage to India in the matter of active defence as it would in assisting Russian aggression. He quoted Mon. Lessar's opinion that the mail contract and other financial advantages to Russia would render the Agreement, on the subject of such a Railway, binding for all time. As for Afghanistan, the Ameer would sanction anything if the advantages were made sufficiently substantial.

A writer in *The Board Arrow* (6th November, 1907), discussed the advantages of a line from Quetta via Kandahar and Herat to the Russian Trans-Caspian line and asserted that the benefits to be gained thereby outweighed all military and political objections. Lord Roberts and Sir Edwin Collen were greatly opposed to this idea.

Three years ago Mr. A. J. Balfour stated that any attempt on the part of Russia to further extend her railways in the direction of India would be regarded as an act of aggression. It would be folly to simplify matters for Russia by agreeing to such a railway, which would also necessitate an enormous increase in the frontier garrisons of India.

As regards the rivers draining the theatre of operations, the Amu Daria forms an important natural obstacle by reason of its swiftness along its middle reaches, its volume on its lower reaches and the changeable nature of its course and level. Above the Vaksh it is 130 to 240 yards wide, at Kilif 300 yards and lower down 3,400 yards wide, and 3 to 10 feet deep. From Kwaja Salch upwards it constitutes the frontier between Bokhara and Afghanistan and is the first obstacle to an invasion by Russia. The only bridge is the new iron railway bridge at Charjui, and there are few fords, though many ferries. It supplies a waterway for the use of boats and is navigable up to Kilif.

Above Kilif and Patta Kesar fords are to be found. The steamer service joins the railway

service at Charjui and there is a river port as well as depots and workshops there. Nominally the service is Charjui to Patta Kesar, but small steamers, drawing not more than 2 feet of water, can run up to the mouth of the Kokcha, whereas larger ones can go no further than Kilif.

There are now 5 steamers, 10 lighters, 2 steam cutters and some naphtha transport vessels plying the Amu Daria. Naphtha is, in all cases, used as fuel.

From December to March navigation is impossible owing to ice and at other times it is difficult. The flood period is from March to July, and the most favourable time for using the river is from July to September. Some of the Amu Daria steamers only travel 12 miles a day and, as the administration is military and the receipts only cover about 20% of the expenditure, the fleet must be held to be kept up solely for military ends.

The rivers within the Central Asian mountain region can only be considered seriously as obstacles during the flood period (caused by the melting of the snow on the mountains) from March to May. Many of them, such as the Har-i-rud, Farahrud and Khashrud dry up in the summer, whilst others lose their water in irrigation canals and disappear in the desert.

The middle course of the Indus and a great part of its upper and lower reaches come within the

theatre of operations. Between Bunji and Torbela the Indus traverses the Himalayas between rocky walls many hundreds of yards high. The valley is extremely narrow and in some places there is no sort of track along the river.

The fall of this stretch (Bunji to Torbela) is very great and the current headlong. Bunji, near Gilgit, is 4,631 feet and Torbela, 25 miles from Attock, is 1,050 feet high. A field bridge is hardly to be thought of and there are no fords.

During the period of high water (middle of May to the end of August) the river often rises to 45 feet above normal. From Torbela to Kalabagh, the surrounding mountains become lower and the valley broader in places, whilst to the West it opens out in the broad basin of Peshawar. There nevertheless still frequently occur along its banks steep, rocky ridges, rising up to 700 feet high, which completely shut in the stream. The stream is 200 to 400 yards wide, and the speed of the current is still as great as $11\frac{1}{2}$ feet per second and the construction of field bridges is very difficult.

At Kalabagh the Indus enters the plains and, at low water, (October to March) its breadth seldom exceeds 900 yards. During the high-water period (May to August) it broadens out to 9,000 yards and, below Dera Ismail Khan, where the stream flows far over its banks, as much as 13 miles. At the normal height of water, the river has a moderate rapidity and winds a great deal.

Fords are not to be found on the lower and middle reaches. The section Kalabagh-Dera Ismail Khan would be easiest to bridge.

The magnitude of the Indus as an obstacle to the line of advance may be imagined from the fact that in the 1839 Afghan War, the British took 16 days to bridge the river at Rohiri, though they held both banks and commanded all the resources of India. The river finally flows into the sea through a many branched delta, through which large vessels are unable to pass. The Indus, besides being an important obstacle to the advance, could be used as a main line of defence as it is parallel to the N. W. Frontier of India. A steamer-service on the Indus is only run as far as Dera Ghazi Khan. Its waterway from Dera Ghazi Khan to its mouth is important, and the navigability of its tributaries increases that importance (there is, amongst others, a steamer-service from Multan to Ferozepore).

Of its tributaries on the right bank the Gilgit and the Kabul rivers are the most important, the latter receiving the waters of the Panjshir, Alandshir, Kunar or Chitral and Swat rivers. Over both these two tributaries suspension bridges are used and they are both violent mountain streams with a steep fall, the valleys are frequently nothing but ravines with steep, rocky walls.

Broad valley basins are found along the Gilgit river at Yassin and Gilgit, and along the Kabul river at Kabul, Jalalabad and the mouth of the Alandshir.

The Kabul river contains an enormous volume of water and both of these rivers, by their swiftness of current, constitute formidable obstacles and could only be bridged with difficulty and in some places not at all.

Below the still considerable Kurram river, all the streams running down from the Eastern Suleimans vanish into the hot plains and do not reach the Indus at all.

The left tributaries of the Indus comprise the five rivers Jhelum, Chenab, Ravee, Beas and Sutlej. They rise in the Himalayas and are less broad and voluminous than the Indus.

In the plains the currents are sluggish and many small islets are formed. High-water occurs at the same period as on the Indus and sets in very quickly, causing frequent inundations.

Besides railway bridges there are a few pontoon bridges and numerous ferries. In addition to steamers there are several thousands of river boats on the Indus and its tributaries.

As regards telegraphic communication with the theatre of operations, it may be here stated that the Indian ramified system extends all over India and its frontiers whilst cables connect it with the mother-country. Communications are excellent. Russian Turkestan is connected with the Russian telegraphic system by a cable from Baku to Krasnovodsk and thence by a telegraphic line along

the Central Asian railway. There is also telegraphic communication by the Orenburg-Tashkent railway and between Omsk and Tashkent. The Turkestan system consists of a trunk line Krasnovodsk-Tashkent-Vierni and a few branch lines therefrom to Khiva, Sarakhs, Uratube, Namangan, Osh. There is no communication with Afghanistan, and Russia relies for political information on her agents there.

The matter of transport has been previously touched on and would be a difficult one for Russia to solve. She would have at her disposal camels, bullocks and steppe ponies (Caucasian and others).

In India the transport arrangements are excellent (the corps system and a general registration of transport animals) and include camels, carrying 400 to 800 lbs. burden. In the Somaliland campaign Indian camels in some cases marched for as many as 10 days without water. There are also ample supplies of mules, donkeys, ponies, bullocks and yaks.

In my discussion of the difficulties of the Hindu Kush and Pamirs, I mentioned four possible directions as far as Kabul and Kandahar and Chitral or Gilgit. They were the following :—

(a) Using Bokhara or Samarkhand as a base and the river Amu Daria as an advanced base, the route from the valleys of Balkh and Khulm through the Bamian and Hajigak passes and on to Kabul via the Unai Pass.

(b) An alternative route to the above on Kabul from Merv to Herat and across Northern Afghanistan.

(c) The route from Kushk over the Hazrat-i-baba Pass, Herat, the Shabbed-Sarai Pass, Sabzawar, Farah and on to Kandahar.

(d) The route termed by Russians the Fergana route (not recognized as possible by the leading British authorities) by the passes Baroghil, Dorah or Nuksan on Gilgit or Chitral.

Assuming Russia's successfully overcoming all difficulties as far as Kabul in her advance from Turkestan, involving a march over three mountain ridges (Kara Kotal Pass, 10,480 feet) into the basin of the Bamian, over the Hajigak or Irak passes of the Hindu Kush into the valley of the Upper Helmund and thence into the Kabul valley over the Unai Pass—from Mazar-i-Sharif hither are practically no resources—she would still have the difficulties of the road to Peshawar and the crossing of the Indus to face. In the direction of Peshawar, there is a road from Kabul over the lower mountains and fertile Jalalabad valley and another through Gandamak to the western entrance of the Khyber Pass. Both roads can be easily defended at many points west of the Khyber Pass. On the southern road, especially, are many difficult defiles, the first being the Khurd Kabul Pass which is about 9,000 yards long. This pass is 42 miles from Kabul. A torrential mountain river with high vertical rocks borders

right on the road. In 1841 a British detachment was cut up to a man in this defile. A few miles beyond the Khurd Kabul Pass comes the Tezin Pass of similar nature and 27 miles long, followed by a broader valley for about two marches when the Jugdalak Pass (7,790 feet high), a ravine, two miles long, is reached.

The road then leads across the valley basin of Gandamak into the Surkhub valley and thence down the Kabul river to Dacca, whence, joining the northern road, it leads into the Khyber Pass which is 33 miles long and has been previously described.

As already mentioned the Khyber Pass can be turned, by troops equipped for mountain warfare, both from the North and South, but these detours are all blocked by forts before debouching on Peshawar.

Another detour, which could be made practicable for vehicles, branches off at Jalalabad (1,950 feet high) and goes through Asmar, the Panjkora Valley and over the fortified Malakand Pass on to Peshawar, which is a well-placed British concentration area and is occupied by a fair-sized garrison (6 battalions of Infantry, 2 regiments of cavalry and several batteries of Artillery). Reinforcements can reach Attock by two railway lines (Lahore-Rawalpindi-Attock and Karachi-Multan-Darya Khan-Attock).

The best roads leading to Peshawar are barred by six forts (amongst them Fort Jamrud standing

opposite the exit of the Khyber Pass). The narrow-gauge line Nowshera-Dargai, the broad-gauge line Peshawar-Jamrud and the road Peshawar-Malakand Pass facilitate the assumption of the offensive, on behalf of Great Britain, on account of the ease of supply whilst works in the Khyber, Kila Drosh and Mastu, would form secure depots. A second line from Kabul to the Indus leads over the Shutargardan Pass (11,300 feet high) and Peiwar Pass (7,700 feet high) into the Kurram valley, thence down this valley to Kohat and on to Khushalgarh. The Kurram valley is populous and cultivated. It penetrates far into the mountains and forms a very favourable concentration area for the British. The road is barred near the frontier by Fort Kurram and leads over the pass at Thal. That, as before mentioned, is connected, via Kohat, with the right bank of the Indus by a good road and a narrow-gauge frontier railway. There was formerly only a bridge of boats over the Indus at Khushalgarh with a cable and swinging crane, but that was replaced in 1907 by an excellent cantilever bridge. Thence is a broad-gauge line from Khushalgarh to Rawalpindi, which latter place has the largest garrison (about 15,000 troops) of any Punjaub station and is the principal army depot of that part of India. These communications are defended to the North of the road between Thal and Kohat by means of several forts, designed against the Afridis and Orakzais occupying the mountains.

There are garrisons at Kohat (3,000), Bannu (2,000) and Thal (1,000).

The further advance from Kandahar to the Indus is also beset with difficulties (it is 360 miles). Russians could not greatly profit by a railway from Kandahar-Sukhur (if built by that time) without constructing one from Herat to Kandahar. Further, Russia could not reckon on the resources of the well-cultivated and populous mountainous district of Pishin and Quetta and of the fertile basins of Thal and Chotiali.

Between Kandahar and Chaman as also between Sibi and the Indus, lie waterless steppes or deserts. An example of the difficulties of crossing these areas can be drawn from the Anglo-Afghan campaign of 1839, when, in one case, owing to lack of water, the British force was divided into small echelons when moving from Shikarpur to Pishin. Cart-roads lead from Kandahar to Dera Ismail Khan through the Kunar and Gomal valleys and by Chaman Pishin there is a road along the Zhob valley to Dera Ismail Khan, another down the Bori valley to Dera Ghazi Khan and another through Quetta via the Bolan Pass to Shikarpur.

From Kandahar is another important road, 270 miles long, via Kelat-i-Ghilzai and Ghazni to Kabul. Thus Kandahar and Pishin are important road centres. At Quetta there is a garrison of about 8,000 troops.

The railways from Raewind, (or Karachi) Shikarpur, Pishin or Quetta render the reinforcement of these stations easy and a railway line to

Kandahar would greatly facilitate access to the latter most important centre.

It would appear that Russia's difficulties in this direction are only to be overcome by a railway, and Great Britain, if she does build a railway in the future to Kandahar, would adopt a particularly weak and suicidal policy did she prolong the same to Herat and thus assist Russia in "bridging the gulf." England should oppose, by every means in her power, an extension of the Merv-Kushk railway into Afghanistan.

The occupation by Russia of Afghan-Turkestan (flanking her railway Merv-Kushk) appears to be very necessary to secure her line of communications and rumours of railways along the Amu Daria from Charjui and from Samarkhand to Karshi and Kilif seem to point to this eventuality. Were Afghan-Turkestan not occupied, Russian troops, concentrating near Panjdeh or Kushk would be threatened in rear and flank by the Afghans (assuming that the latter did not side with Russia). As regards the Ferghana route, the best lines for a Russian advance would appear to be from Kulab via Faizabad and the Dorah Pass from the fortified stations Kala-i-Wamar and Pamirski Post across Afghan territory to Cihtral and possibly the Yassin-Gilgit route.

From Zebak radiate four or five paths over passes of the Hindu Kush, rising up to 16,000 feet above the sea-level, and only passable from June

to September. Of these the best known is via the Dorah Pass, which is the trade route between Chitral and Badakshan.

Mountain passes unite at Chitral and then descend the Kunar valley. This, however, becomes so narrow that communication is carried over the mountain ridge itself. The road crosses the Lowarai and Panjkora passes and then continues over mountainous country to the Malakand Pass, whence it descends to Peshawar or via Asmar back into the Kunar valley and Kabul river into the basin of Jalalabad.

In April and May 1895 the British with a total force of 16 battalions, 12 squadrons, 4 batteries and a supply column with 10,000 camels, oxen and mules, advanced from Peshawar along the Malakand Pass via Miankalai and Lowarai Pass to Chitral.

The road was then only a bad track and the distance of 135 miles from Peshawar to Chitral took 40 days, the day's march averaging 4 miles a day and the Lowarai Pass causing considerable difficulty.

The track from Pamirski Post (12,000 feet high) leads through the valley of the Ak Su, that from Kala-i-Wamar leads into and up the valleys of the Panjah and Wakhan Daria rivers without crossing higher ridges.

From the sources of the Ak Su and Wakhan Daria to the summits of the passes of the Eastern Hindu Kush (Baroghil, Ionov, Wakhir, Kilik, Rich

and Kermin) there are no greater ridges to cross and the most difficult line would be the Eastern one leading down to Gilgit over five passes (up to 15,000 feet high) and through wild mountainous country. Traffic is maintained between the Wakhan Daria valley and that of Gilgit for nearly eight months in the year (April to November). From Gilgit a military bridle path, (constructed in the eighties by the British) 230 miles in length, leads into the great fertile and densely populated valley of Srinagar. From this valley another 120 to 130 miles, either over the mountains or through the narrow Jhelum gorge, have to be covered before arriving at the Jhelum-Rawalpindi railway. Colonel Kelly's expedition, (1895) already referred to, gives an idea of the difficulties experienced by his small force of 500 men, with two mountain guns, in its march from Gilgit to Chitral. He left Yassin on the 20th March and, reaching the Shandar Pass, (9,400 feet high) had to wait several days before crossing on account of the cold and snowstorms. During the crossing of his force transport animals had to be unloaded and the guns carried up by the men. There were many cases of frost-bite and snow-blindness and only 300 men reached Mastuj. Chitral was reached on the 18th April after great hardships, the distance Gilgit to Chitral (just over 200 miles) having been covered in 29 days.

There is an easy road from Osh by the Terek Pass to Kashgar, Yarkand and Sanju. From Osh to the head of the Terek Pass is about 65 miles and

thence to Kashgar is 120 miles. From Kashgar to Yarkand is 120 miles. Thence to Sanju and over the Karakorum Pass (16,500 feet) (lying on the important road from Leh to Chinese Turkestan), to Ladak would be extremely difficult for an army. Indeed no army of any size could pass over the Sanju Divan or any of the other passes between Kashgar and Kashmir.

From Osh to the Baroghil Pass (12,000 feet high) is about 655 miles through Yarkand and Sarhadd. The Baroghil is, via Mastuj and the Kunar valley, 250 miles from Jalalabad.


South-east of Yarkand runs a good road to Kiria. Thence, partly by old Chinese roads into Tibet and partly by other little explored routes, a small force might hope to reach Rudok, close to the Indian frontier, whence the way would be easy.

Lastly, the Russian advance would arrive at the Indus, already described as a formidable natural obstacle, which has been further artificially fortified and strengthened by the British at Dera Ismail Khan, Kalabagh, Attock and Sukhur.

I shall leave the question of concentration areas situated in the theatre of operations to a future chapter, in which I propose to discuss Russia's present position in Central Asia.

From the description given above of the theatre of operations, it is clear the dangers of an invasion

of India are not so great as pessimists at home would have the British public believe. Far greater than any outside danger is the internal one of dissension, likely to germinate at any moment in such a vast, thickly populated country, and, growing quietly for a short period, suddenly to bear fruit in bloodshed and havoc in a country that has been carefully nursed for 150 years to higher ideals and ambitions and a higher standard of civilization in general.





CHAPTER VI

**Countries, States or Principalities
influencing directly or indirectly the
theatre of operations or the
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generally.**

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A QUESTION dealing with such a large theatre of operations as that just described in the last chapter, necessarily involves many countries, states or principalities, situated both within and without that theatre of operations, and which must exert, either directly or indirectly, some manifest or occult influence, an influence frequently extended to the whole question.

Many of the countries influencing the Central Asian question have already been mentioned by me in previous chapters. Persia, Khiva, Bokhara and Russian Turkestan have already been sufficiently treated for the purposes of this book. India proper has been fully dealt with, and I propose devoting this short chapter to a little useful information concerning Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Nepal, Tibet and Kashmir, followed by a short account of the disturbances in China in 1900, touching on the reasons for the same and the effect they, together with other matters in the Far East, have had on the Central Asian Question with regard to Japan, China and Russia.

Next to India, by far the most important country situated within the theatre of operations,

is Afghanistan. Afghanistan has been recognised by Great Britain, more especially in recent years, as a great independent "Buffer State," being sandwiched between her Indian possessions and the Asiatic dominions of the Czar.

A former Viceroy referred to India as a fortress, with the sea, like a moat, on two sides and mountains on the third. He termed Afghanistan the "Wales of India."

Afghanistan is almost twice as large as the British Isles and is administered by one ruler, who is given the title of "Ameer." The state consists of a square, mountainous, irregular plateau, about 220,000 square miles in area, at an altitude varying in parts from 3,000 to 5,000 feet above the sea-level. It is intersected by ridges of great height and valleys of varying breadth, thus rendering the greater part of the country valueless for agricultural purposes, and making it difficult to traverse and almost impossible to govern satisfactorily. Its climate, as may be gauged from its physical characteristics, is variable, with extremes of heat and cold. Many of its valleys are as uninhabitable in the hot season—when the deadly simoon is prevalent—as are the mountainous districts during the winter months. For this reason the population without the few towns is largely nomadic, the pastoral section of it being necessarily so.

The population is small and might be put down at about five million souls. They are not all

Afghans, as one might be led to suppose, for the term "Afghanistan," as also the term "Afghan," was erroneously applied by foreigners and was meant to denote the territory over which the Durani chief holds sway.

In that territory the Afghans are neither the most ancient nor the wealthiest, but, owing to the common use of the term by Persian and Indian authorities, the Ameer now styles himself King of the State of Afghanistan. The original Iranian stock is to be found in the Tajiks, who are closely allied to the Persians in language and habits, and are hence known as Parsiwans. They are found in Western Afghanistan, principally in the district of Herat.

The true Afghans, as distinguished from the affiliated Afghans, as they have been termed, are those of the Durani tribes, who call themselves Bin-i-Israel and claim descent from the the ten lost tribes, who were carried away from Syria into captivity by Bukhtunasar (Nebuchadnezzar). Not only in his traditions and family nomenclature but even in his characteristic features does the Durani betray distinct traces of Hebraic origin.

The Duranis are the most numerous of the Afghan tribes and inhabit southern Afghanistan, particularly the district of Zamindawar. They were originally known as Abdali, the term Durani dating only from the days of Ahmed Shah. The tribe has three main divisions and to one of them, the

Barakzai, the present Royal House, founded by Dost Mahomed, belongs. The Duranis are the most warlike and fanatical of all the tribes, and have retained the chief power by their prowess, religious enthusiasm and control of the best arms and ammunition.

Another important tribe is that of the Ghilzais, who are the trading part of the community. They are a powerful section and, without their support, no Ameer could long retain the throne of Kabul. The tribes occupying the central mountainous zone are of Mongol origin, relics of the invasion of Jhengiz Khan. These Hazaras, as they are termed, have always maintained a degree of independence which has ever been a source of annoyance to the Afghan Ameers, who find it difficult to penetrate into their mountain fastnesses. They are a sturdy, wiry race and are excellent workmen and soldiers ; many of them are employed in the Indian Army.

Another section of the population which, until nearly decimated by the armies of the Ameer a few years ago, always retained its independence is that occupying Kafiristan between the Kabul and Chitral rivers.

These tribes are in reality remnants of divers kinds, speaking many dialects, and having absolutely nothing in common with the Afghans or Ghilzais and little with each other. They are of Aryan stock, and have never, as a people, embraced the Mussulman faith. Hence their name "Kafir" which signifies "infidel."

Afghanistan is divided into five provinces or districts, each of which is ruled by a Governor, to whom the various tribal chiefs and jirgahdars are responsible. These Governors are appointed by the Ameer and are removable by his sovereign will. The whole system of government is feudal, and only the iron hand of the Ameers, ruthlessly employed, has kept the heterogeneous elements composing the State in proper subjection.

North of the mountain belt, and between it and the northern frontier, is the province of Afghan Turkestan. North-East of the Turkestan province is that of Badakshan, the ancient Bactria, long coveted by Russia and added to Afghanistan by Dost Mahomed in 1859. The three remaining provinces are named from their principal towns—Herat, Kabul and Kandahar—familiar in history. Herat, long designated the “Key of India,” has passed through many vicissitudes of fortune, already referred to in another chapter. Its importance has, of recent years, been considerably discounted, as far as Great Britain is concerned, owing to her own improved position in Baluchistan. The whole province is a fertile granary capable of supporting a considerable force, and the fortress of Herat commands the road leading to Kandahar and Kabul and thence to India. The Herat valley extends for about 200 miles and is watered by the Hari Rud river. Resistance by Herat for any length of time to an army equipped with modern appliances would, of course, be futile.

Kandahar is the southern province and of most importance to Great Britain. Its chief town is the largest, though not the most populous, in Afghanistan and is but seventy miles from our frontier station at Chaman, which is connected with our great fortress of Quetta by 125 miles of railway, already referred to. Kandahar has been occupied on more than one occasion by British troops and, at Maiwand, just beyond it occurred one of the greatest disasters to the British arms when Burrows' Brigade was overwhelmed by the hordes of Ayub Khan, necessitating that brilliant march of General Sir Frederick Roberts* from Kabul to Kandahar. The province is generally open country, but dry and parched, except in the valleys watered by the numerous streams which go to form the Helmund river. The distance from Kandahar to Herat, as the crow flies, is about 280 miles, but the only route is the "Khafila" (caravan) track via Girishk and Farah, extending to over 360 miles.

From Kandahar northwards to Kabul there is an excellent road and on this line prosperous Afghanistan may be said to lie. Here is the country of the Ghilzai tribes, whose trading caravans traverse the frontier passes and spread over the Punjab. On this route is the strong fortress of Kelat-i-Ghilzai and the famous city of Ghazni, once the capital of a mighty empire and the seat of two dynasties. Ghazni is situated on a tableland of the Paghman range, a branch of the Kindu Hush, and

* Now Earl Roberts, K. G.

all that remains of its former glories are the ruins of its forts and the tomb of its greatest ruler. Near Ghazni is the Sher Dahan Pass, the only formidable part of the route.

Kabul, the capital of the remaining province and of the kingdom and the seat of its sovereign and Supreme Government, is about 100 miles north of Ghazni and in almost the same latitude as Herat. Kabul is built on a plain at an altitude of over 7,000 feet and is a dirty, insanitary city, surrounded by high mountains with the gorges of the Kabul river leading into fertile valleys beyond.

The importance of Kabul rests on two facts:

- (1) At Kabul the mountain tracks leading over the Hindu Kush reach an area suitable for concentration of large forces. The advance of large forces could be checked by dealing with detachments before junction.
- (2) There is a good line of communications towards Kandahar (270 miles).

The standing army of Afghanistan numbers about 50,000 infantry, 5,000 cavalry and 1,000 artillery with 200 guns. As universal conscription obtains in Afghanistan, in case of war, all men capable of bearing arms would be summoned to the colours, but it is doubtful whether more than 250,000 would obey the call. The Ameer in 1896 attempted to enforce one-eighth of the population nominally

serving in the army and it was only possible to do so in certain districts. The army is well armed with modern weapons, but the soldiers are badly trained and could not be compared with European troops.

It has already been fully explained that the mountainous condition of the country, the questions of supply and transport and the power of resistance of the Afghan Army would all have to be seriously taken into account by an invading army.

Since 1883 the reigning Ameer has received a subsidy which was originally one of twelve lacs of rupees annually, but was increased to eighteen lacs in 1893 or roughly £ 120,000. This annual subsidy was, according to the words of Lord Ripon, granted to him as "an aid towards meeting the difficulties in the management of his State."

The late Ameer, Abdur Rahman, who finally cemented his friendship with us "because Russia's goal lay beyond Afghanistan whereas Great Britain would only enter the country in case of the necessity of self-preservation" is said to have likened his kingdom to a large lake and himself to a swan swimming on its surface. On one bank of the lake there lay, watching and waiting, an old tigress—the British Government in India—on the other was assembled a pack of greedy wolves—Russia. When the swan approached too near to one bank, the tigress clawed out some of his feathers, and when to the opposite bank the wolves tried to tear him in pieces. He resolved therefore to keep secure from

either foe in the middle of the lake. For Afghanistan's safety as an independent state Great Britain has made herself responsible and, in return, the Ameer has undertaken certain obligations. It behoves us therefore to see that the state duly fulfils, in the proper spirit, the obligations imposed upon it. Habibullah Khan succeeded to the Afghan throne in 1901.

There was some quarrelling between Russian and Afghan soldiers in 1904 owing to the destruction by the former of certain guard houses erected on the borders of Turkestan. Just then the Ameer injured his hand while shooting and the Viceroy of India, at his request, sent his own doctor (Major Bird, I.M.S.) to Kabul to treat him, which he successfully did. This doubtless paved the way for the despatch of the Special Mission to Kabul under Sir Louis Dane, accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel Malleson, A. Q. M. G., (now chief of the Intelligence Branch, Simla) on 12th December, 1904, which was cordially received. The Ameer agreed to enter into all the conventions which had been in existence between the British Government and his father Abdur Rahman.

Habibullah has broken several traditions since his accession to the Afghan throne. Despite the rule that the heir should not leave the country, his eldest son the Sidar Inayatullah Khan paid a lengthy visit to the Viceroy at Calcutta, which was followed later by his own visit, which cannot but be

productive of ultimate good. On his first official visit to the Viceroy in India, the Ameer took his seat on a silver throne and the Viceroy, when tea was served, poured out milk for the Ameer, the Ameer doing the same for the Viceroy. Next day a great review of 30,000 troops took place and the Maharaja of Gwalior, in person, led past his regiment of Lancers. In the evening a Chapter of Orders was held and the Ameer was invested, in the name of the King, with the Grand Cross of the Bath. He made several motor excursions when in India and ascended in a military balloon.

The principal programme concluded in Bombay, with field-firing displays, races and visits to battle-ships. The Ameer then said: "I have heard Western education disparaged by old-fashioned Mahomedans. What foolishness! I stand here as a sincere friend of European culture. I have founded a school in Afghanistan and given to it my own name. In it Western knowledge and erudition will be inculcated by Western methods."

At the death of the late Ameer Abdur Rahman, trade from India with Afghanistan was less than on his accession and it is to be hoped that the Ameer Habibullah, who is so imbued with the desire of furthering the interior trade and communications in his country, will also abandon the antipathy of his fathers towards Indian trade and commerce.

As regards the attitude of Afghanistan to Great Britain, Dr. V. Winter, late Confidential Physician

to the Afghan Court, who was two years in Afghanistan, referring to the recent adoption of the offensive by an Afghan force against Landi Kotal, says: "There can be no doubt whatever of the Ameer's strong loyalty to Great Britain." He describes his having referred to a railway connecting Afghanistan with India as a very good scheme favoured by himself "but, unfortunately," said he, "I am only one man."

Dr. Winter summarises the present situation at Kabul as follows :—

(1) Absolute loyalty of the Ameer to Great Britain and acquiescence in the Anglo-Russian Agreement.

(2) Anti-British attitude of Prince Nasrullah Khan, brother of the Ameer, who is concerned in extensive political intrigues during the Ameer's absence from Kabul, and who has become a mullah.

(3) Inability of the Ameer to overcome these intrigues, owing to the general feeling in Afghanistan.

(4) Significant importation into Afghanistan of large quantities of arms and ammunition by way of Karachi.

Dr. Winter further says :—"Prince Nasrullah Khan is playing a deep game, which has for its object the downfall of the Ameer, and he is entirely anti-British. The Ameer is absolutely in favour of the Anglo-Russian agreement and would have

signed it long ago, except for the pressure which has been brought upon him from outside. He is absolutely opposed to any display of anti-British feeling, but, at the same time, cannot ignore the feelings of his people."

It seems to me that the people of Afghanistan regard an agreement of this kind as foreshadowing a future partition, and it is essentially one that the Asiatic would, under ordinary circumstances, find it hard to understand.

There is no doubt that, though the Ameer and some of his people are much more prone to British influence than to Russian, the majority of the people of Afghanistan, particularly those tribes in Afghan Turkestan and Herat, are friendly disposed to Russia. According to Russian opinion the whole country is favourably disposed towards them, but the loss of the large subsidy from the Indian Government prevents the Afghan authorities from letting this fact be known.

There is an arsenal in Kabul, managed by an English engineer, where ammunition, rifles and guns are manufactured. It could probably turn out 20,000 cartridges and 15 rifles per day and 2 guns per week.

About 9 or 10 years ago, I met Sir Salter Pyne in Peshawar on his return from Kabul, where he had been for many years engineer-in-chief to the Ameer, and he then told me that gigantic strides

had been made in Afghanistan in engineering, particularly as regards bridging and the manufacture and repair of arms. In the last 9 or 10 years matters must necessarily have still further advanced in this respect.

The situation to-day, aggravated, perhaps, by the proposed Anglo-Russian agreement, is one of great moment in Afghanistan and it behoves us to consolidate our relations with this state and its ruler by the most lasting bonds of friendship and goodwill and thus make of Afghanistan a Buffer State indeed.

Another very important country within the theatre of operations is Baluchistan. Baluchistan is a British Protectorate, situated to the west of the Indian Empire, with a population of about 1,100,000 souls. The ruler of independent Baluchistan is the Khan of Kelat. By the treaty of 1876, concluded for the British Government by Sir Robert Sandeman with the tribal chieftains, was constituted a renewal of the offensive and defensive alliance of 1854. This treaty also recognizes the status of the chieftains and appoints the British Indian Government as arbitrator between them and the Khan for outstanding disputes. The Khan receives a yearly subsidy and, in addition, a fixed share in agricultural outputs, which might together scale 5 lacs of rupees (about £32,000).

The Baluchi tribes, who are all assigned by Risley to Turco-Iranian stock, are a warlike and

pleasant people and, though very wild, make good soldiers, many of them being employed in our Indian Army.

The coast-line of Baluchistan is very barren and unfruitful though, by the establishment of good arrangements for irrigation, the valleys of Quetta, Pishin and the Zhob river have been transformed into green oases in the midst of mountainous regions.

Baluchistan has become an extremely important country to the British, especially in recent years, mainly for the following reasons :—

(1) Quetta would form an excellent concentration camp in case of an invasion of India.

(2) The Scinde-Pishin Railway, running from Jacobabad over the Indian Frontier through the Kachhi desert and splitting into two parts at Sibi Junction, takes us by Railway to Chaman (called New Chaman) only 70 miles from Kandahar.

(3) Pishin-Quetta is a great road centre.

(4) In 1901 the trade route between Quetta and Persia via Nushki and Seistan was opened up and a railway from Quetta to Nushki, 90 miles long, was built and opened to traffic in 1905.

It can be instantly seen from this how very important Baluchistan is to great Britain, for the value of Herat is discounted by our nearness to Kandahar at Chaman and the Seistan question, to which Baluchistan supplies one of the keys, is bound

to be one of great importance and moment to Great Britain and Russia in the near future.

As regards Nepaul, I need only mention it as an independent State ruled by its own potentate. It is the home of the Gurkha warriors who assisted us in the Indian Mutiny of 1857. An army of regulars and irregulars, amounting to about 35,000 men, is maintained (2,500 Artillery with 900 guns). In this army, which is well equipped with Martinis and Sniders, the 3 years short service system is in vogue.

British India with its vassal state of Sikhim, which reaches into the heart of the Himalayas, borders on Tibet, the state of the Dalai Lama, which is a large plateau nominally recognizing the suzerainty of China. Although, from the time of Warren Hastings, projects for extending trade with Tibet have from time to time been entertained by the Government of India, the desire of the people of that country to maintain their seclusion has been so strong that no serious effort has been made to carry them out.

China, the nominal suzerain of Tibet, has repeatedly admitted her inability to control the action of the Tibetans and has declined to be responsible for them.

In 1886 the Tibetans invaded Sikhim and were not finally driven out until 1888. In 1890,

the Chinese Amban at Lhasa* proceeded to Calcutta and a treaty was drawn up and duly ratified between India and China providing for the settlement of disputes and the establishment of trade relations. This was followed by a further convention with the same object in 1893, but no real settlement was ever made and the officials of the Dalai Lama managed to limit very narrowly all British trade and throw obstacles in its way. But, whilst English efforts have been unsuccessful during 30 years, Russians have succeeded, in recent times, in gaining concessions from the Dalai Lama favoring Russian trade and influence in Tibet.

This latter circumstance constituted a strong incentive to action on the part of the Government of India, as it was deemed that Russia had designs on Tibet. In 1902 the Chinese Government itself suggested that a Chinese Commissioner should proceed to the frontier to discuss on the spot the questions at issue and, in May 1903, it was informed that a British Commissioner would meet the Chinese and Tibetan representatives at Kampe Dzong.

The British mission, escorted by 200 Sikh soldiers, arrived there in July. Neither the Chinese nor Tibetan envoys put in an appearance, but instead the Tibetans gradually mustered their forces to oppose the mission. At the end of the year, 2,800 men were placed under the command of Colonel Macdonald and all preparations for an advance were

Sometimes spelt Lhasa.

pushed on. Early in 1904, as the envoys had not yet arrived at Kampe Dzong, the expeditionary force crossed the Tang Pass and again halted. On March 31st the march on Gyangtse was commenced, but several engagements had to be fought before the force encamped there on the 12th April.

On May 6th 800 Tibetans suddenly attacked the camp and were repulsed. Various other acts of hostility rendered the mission a non-peaceful one. A letter despatched to the Dalai Lama on the 1st of June, fixing the 26th June as the limit of time within which envoys would be received at Gyangtse, was returned unopened. On the 3rd July negotiations were finally broken off. Reinforcements arrived and the escort, then numbering 1,000 British and 2,000 Native troops, moved on Lhasa on July 14th. Lhasa was reached on August 3rd but the Dalai Lama had left the city.

On September 7th, 1904, a treaty, written in English, Chinese and Tibetan was signed and Colonel Younghusband (the British Commissioner) and the Regent affixed their seals.

Colonel Younghusband explained to the Tibetans that they cannot prevent the Government of India reaching Lhasa and that Russian promises of help are valueless and further that, though Great Britain does not want to interfere in Tibet, she will not allow her to fall under the influence of another power. Hence, as may be imagined, one of the provisions of the treaty above referred to

was to the effect that Tibet will allow no foreign power to obtain concessions or interfere in any way with Tibetan affairs without the consent of Great Britain.

The expedition left Lhasa and arrived in India a month later.

The treaty was published in 1905 and its provisions were satisfactory, but time will show whether the Tibetans will observe them or not.

Tibet, apart from its geographical position is important as the centre of Buddhism, which has gathered into its enormous fold (nearly 500,000,000 Buddhists) the greater part of the populations of Mongolia, China and Burma besides many Kashmiris and Bengalees.

As this goes to press news has been received that the Dalai Lama has been deposed by an Imperial Edict of the Emperor of China and that he has fled to India to avoid capture by a large force of Chinese troops which have entered Thibet to enforce the Edict.

As regards the vassal state of Kashmir, Russia imagines that the present Maharaja would throw in his lot with them in case of an invasion of India owing to his having been deprived of his rights for 20 years by the British. He nevertheless proved a good ally in 1895 when he supplied 4,500 well behaved troops.

Kashmir possesses about 13,000 regular troops.

I shall close this chapter with a few words concerning the risings in China in 1900, which have direct bearing on the Central Asian Question and influenced it in more ways than one.

The immediate result of the campaign undertaken by Japan in 1895 against China was to reveal the ambition of Japan and the presumed weakness of the Chinese Empire. Russia and the Western Powers imagined a break-up of China was imminent and that, if Japan was to be thwarted in her ambitious designs, it could only be achieved by the intervention of Europe.

Great Britain's Open-door Policy was abandoned and the policy of spheres of influence, inaugurated by Germany, was readily adopted by the Continental Cabinets of Europe. Shantung was ceded to Germany which induced Russia to claim Port Arthur and Great Britain Wei-hai-wei.

France and Italy followed suit and the Chinese became alarmed. Advantage was taken of the general hatred of foreigners in the country and circulars were sent to provincial Viceroy's of an approaching attack on the Legations at Peking. A general attack was designed so as to hold the ambassadors as hostages until Europe agreed to treat China as "A Sealed Book."

In order to seize the Ministers together they were invited in a body to the Tsung-li-Yamen,

but all save the German Minister (Baron von Ketteler), suspecting a plot, refused to attend. The movement grew rapidly, various societies such as "The Big Sword," "Fist of Righteous Harmony" (Boxers) and many others being inaugurated.

In January 1900, Brooks, an English Missionary, was murdered. Native Christians were next attacked and murdered or burnt alive and their property pillaged. On June 2nd two Missionaries, Norman and Robinson, were cruelly murdered and many others suffered a similar fate.

On June 17th the Taku Forts fired on the allied squadron (French, German, Russian, Japanese and British) but were silenced and captured after a 6 hours' engagement.

Meanwhile in Pekin the Japanese Chancellor of Legation was brutally murdered by Chinese soldiers, the Tientsin railway was torn up and the telegraph poles sawn off close to the ground. As it was unsafe for the Ministers to leave Pekin for Tientsin, it was decided to hold out at the Legation.

The siege began on the 20th June. There were 407 officers and men besieged,—British, American, Japanese, French, Italian, Austrian, Russian and German, (mostly marines and blue-jackets). The Austrian and American buildings were soon abandoned and the British Legation was crowded.

For nearly 8 weeks this small force made a splendid defence.

On June 10th a force of 2,500 men of all nationalities under Admiral Seymour left Tientsin to relieve Pekin but, owing to scarcity of supplies, the destruction of the railway and molestation by the Boxers, they had to withdraw.

After considerable delay, another relief force under Generals Gaselee and Chappee left Tientsin on August 4th headed by British and American troops. Several engagements occurred before the British obtained the first entry into Pekin on August 13th. The Empress-Dowager and Imperial Court fled and in October peace negotiations were opened. The International Forces consisted of :

Japanese	10,000
Russians	4,000
British	3,000
Americans	2,000
French	800
Germans	200
Austrians }	100
Italians }	
<hr/>	
Total	... 20,100 men.
<hr/>	

Thus has China been responsible for 3 campaigns which have, each of them, to a greater or lesser degree, influenced the Central Asian Question. The first (1895) sprung out on us a

new great rising power in the Far East. The second was a combination of the powers, who all sent troops thither, to pacify China and decide knotty points as to that country's future. The third, the Russo-Japanese War, was in part brought on by the results of the second campaign. This last has left no doubt about the supremacy in the Far East having fallen to a new recently-civilized rising power and it appears to me probable that British and Japanese interests may clash in the distant future.

French and British interests are likely to remain distinct from one another. France and Great Britain are the two most civilized races in the world, and, as such, ought to be bound together by the most strongly cemented bonds of friendship. A more permanent alliance between France and Great Britain could be a lasting and profitable one, and one that might bid fair to keep the peace of the world and balance international equilibrium.

CHAPTER VII.

**Russia's Present Position in Central
Asia and a discussion of the new
Anglo-Russian Agreement.**

MAP ILLUSTRATING RUSSIAN ADVANCE IN ASIA.



CHAPTER VII.

Russia's Present Position in Central Asia and a discussion of the new Anglo-Russian Agreement.

HAVING explained to my readers the nature and geographical configuration of the vast stretch of country destined to constitute the theatre of operations in case of an invasion of India on the part of Russia, and discussed the main physical difficulties and natural obstacles, as well as the importance and inclinations of certain countries, states or principalities influencing or likely to influence that theatre of operations and, in certain cases, the whole Central Asian Question, I pass on now to a brief sketch of Russia's present position in Central Asia.

Russia's position in Central Asia only directly concerns Great Britain in so far as it relates to Persia, Seistan, Afghanistan, Tibet and India, whereas, in the Far East, though the influence likely to be brought to bear by Russia and Japan on Great Britain's Central Asian Policy is only indirect, it nevertheless may at any time suddenly develop into a very important factor on which may depend, in the distant future, the further consolidation or the total upheaval of the interests of our

own great country in these vast Central Asiatic regions.

Russia's present boundary line, as far as Persia is concerned, runs along the Aras River circumventing Talish to the Caspian Sea, from the Caspian Sea along the Atrek River and thence, coasting along the Trans-Caspian Railway, through Sarakhs to Zulfikar. Her boundary from Afghanistan runs from Zulfikar to Kushk, thence to the Amu Daria about 40 miles west of Kilif and along the Amu Daria and Panjah rivers to the Thian Shan Mountains.

As regards the Far East, Russia, by the Treaty of Portsmouth, retains half of the island of Saghalien and maintains her sphere of influence in Manchuria as far as Harbin, the territory from Harbin to the waters of the Yellow Sea having passed to that of Japan.

Persia's boundary with Afghanistan runs from Zulfikar along the Har-i-rud River and southwards to a point East of Nasratabad, thence in a South-westerly direction to Koh-i-malik Siah and with Baluchistan from Koh-i-malik Siah to a point on the coast of the Arabian Sea about 40 miles west of the Gwador Port.

Afghanistan's boundary with Baluchistan runs from Koh-i-malik Siah to New Chaman.

India's boundary with Afghanistan has been previously referred to and is plainly shown on Map I.

Mr. Angus Hamilton, who has visited most of the different places in the Central Asian theatre and who, as previously stated, is an adherent to the Russian point of view an regards an invasion of India, stated Russia's position in 1904-1905 as follows:—"In 12 months' time the Orenburg-Tashkent railway will be finished. There will be, in the near future, a railway from Samarkhand to Termez, thus giving Russia two rail-heads on the Afghan frontier (Termez and Kushk). Russia's military preparations are causing great anxiety in Kabul. They are now only 70 * miles from Herat. Every place from Osh to Sarakhs is an armed camp. An army of 200,000 men has been concentrated in the Central Asian theatre overlooking the Afghan frontier †. Troops are already in frontier garrisons at Kala Khum, Chushka Guzar, Termez, Kilif, Kerki, Kushk and Sarakhs, Merv, Hissar and Shahr-i-Sabez forming intermediate bases. The British, at New Chaman are 370 miles from Herat. ‡"

"And when the hour arrives (at present unpropitious and, in my opinion, very remote) unless the British Government interfere, the territory lying between the Hindu Kush and the Oxus will be Russian before any Indian troops can arrive. Russia's reason for massing such a large number of troops on the Afghan frontier I assign to her

* 67 miles.

† Mr. Angus Hamilton has not exaggerated the number. As before mentioned, I was in Russia at the time and an invasion of India was frequently discussed and would then have been a very popular move on the part of the government.

‡ But only 70 miles from Kandahar.

endeavour to counteract Manchurian reverses. I consider it more than likely, in the near future, that Russia's frontier will run along the Hindu Kush."

On the 12th July, 1907, Mr. David Fraser, the *Times of India* correspondent in Central Asia, in his lecture on "Russia in Central Asia" to the Central Asian Society, London, after giving vent to many platitudes with regard to Tibet, the Pamirs and Seistan, all of which he considers unimportant factors as regards an invasion of India, goes on to state as follows:—"Everything east of the Pamirs and everything west of Merv may be left out of consideration altogether and it is necessary only to concentrate one's attention on that portion of Afghanistan which directly faces the Russian border. It is only from this section of her frontier, about 600 miles long, that Russia can hope to operate. The effect of Russia's railways has been to bridge every difficulty which lies between Russia proper and the Indian political frontier.* But for one short section of railway, which might be built in a few months, Russia is able to place on the Afghan border an army of almost unlimited dimensions. When we consider what the single line of the Siberian Railway did in the late Russo-Japanese war, we cannot afford to ignore the potentialities of the Central Asian system of railways."

* Russia, Afghanistan and India practically meet in the Wakhan Valley, which is immediately north of the Hindu Kush and comprises the upper part of the valley of the Ab-i-Panj headwater of the Amu Daria and that of its tributary, the Wakhan Su.

“In the beginning of 1904 it was obvious that trouble with Japan might spread until her ally (Great Britain) was involved and so the garrison of Central Asia was augmented as a precautionary measure. It was, however, quickly realised that the belligerents were to be allowed to fight it out alone without the intervention of other European powers, whereupon Russia ceased to reinforce the garrison of Turkestan. The maximum number of troops was reached in the spring of 1904 and probably never exceeded 75,000.* At no subsequent period has the garrison of Central Asia been augmented.”

Mr. Fraser then discussed the railway system and designated it as the supreme factor in any schemes which may exist for the conquest of India. He went on to state that he had very good reasons for being able to assert that not a single rail of the extension line Samarkhand-Termez had yet been laid and that there was no immediate intention of commencing its construction. He estimated the Herat garrison at six battalions of infantry with a fair proportion of artillery and continued to sum up the situation as follows:—

“Russia can take Herat at any time and it is a problem for our military authorities to decide as to what our action should be in such a case. How long it would take a column to dash forward and secure a position on the Hindu Kush commanding Kabul, is a matter for conjecture. The initial advantages

* Mr. Fraser has under-estimated the number.

must lie with the enemy, and Russia, by her railway policy, has, in my opinion, committed herself to the Herat route."

Sir Edwin Collen* who, as Chairman, introduced Mr. David Fraser, admitted that he was very much in agreement with many of the opinions expressed by him, but considered that Chitral was the vital and dangerous spot in our line of defence (thus, in part, agreeing with certain Russian opinions regarding this locality). He also emphatically disagreed with the lecturer as regards the exclusion of Persia as a factor in the strategic problem.

As regards the number of troops, either actually available in close proximity to the theatre of operations or that it would be possible to concentrate within a very short space of time in case of a projected invasion of India, I consider it expedient here to quote the present actual number of Russian troops stationed in

- (1) Turkestan.
- (2) The Caucasus.
- (3) Siberia.

The troops stationed in Russian Turkestan amount to a peace strength of about 60,000 men, expanding, on mobilisation, to about 120,000, including 2 railway battalions of 6 companies each.

* He is a great traveller and has visited the Central Asian theatre. Herepresented *The Times* with General Kuroki in 1904 and with General Nogi in 1905.

The Turkestan Army is divided into 2 Army Corps, disposed of as follows:—

1st Turkestan Army Corps.

Head-quarters at Tashkent.

<i>Strength.</i>	<i>Stations.</i>
4 Brigades :—	One Brigade at each of the following places : Tashkent, Samarkhand, Novi Margilan and Termez.
1 Reserve Brigade	Tashkent.
1st Brigade Artillery	Tashkent.
1st Turkestan Cossack Division	Samarkhand.
1 Horse Battery	Termez.

2nd Turkestan Army Corps.

Head-quarters at Askabad.

<i>Strength.</i>	<i>Stations.</i>
3 Brigades	Brigades at Askabad, Merv and Kerki.
1 Trans-Caspian Cossack Brigade	Askabad.
1 Reserve Brigade	Askabad.
2nd Brigade Artillery	Askabad.
4th Kuban Cossack Horse Battery	Kahka.
Amu Daria Flotilla	Charjui.

In this 2nd Turkestan Army Corp there are also some Fortress Artillery, two Railway Battalions

of 6 companies each, a Sapper Brigade, and some Frontier Guards. There are garrisons at :—

	<i>In peace-time.</i>	<i>On mobilisation.</i>
Askabad	8,000	17,000
Kerki	4,000	6,000
Charjui	1,000	1,200
Merv	5,000	12,000
Kushk	4,000	10,000
Termez	5,000	6,000
Samarkhand	7,000	13,000
Tashkent	9,000	21,000
Khokand, Novi Margilan, Andijan Osh, Sarakhs and Krasnovodsk.		

The Russian detachments in the Ferghana and Pamir regions number about 1,000 men (about 130 men at Pamirski Post) which include Cossacks and Bokharian Irregulars.

The Caucasian Army also consists of two Army Corps, both of which have their Head-quarters at Tiflis.

1st Caucasian Army Corps.

<i>Strength.</i>	<i>Stations.</i>
2 Infantry Divisions	Both at Alexandropol.
2 Caucasian Cossack Divisions	One at Kars, one at Erivan.
2 Reserve Infantry Brigades	One at Gori, one at Tiflis.
2 Artillery Brigades	One at Akhaltsikh and one at Alexandropol.

2nd Caucasian Army Corps.

<i>Strength.</i>	<i>Stations.</i>
1 Caucasian Grenadier Division	Tiflis.
2 Infantry Divisions	One at Vladikavkaz, one Stavropol.
1 Caucasian Cavalry Division	Tiflis.
2 Caucasian Rifle Brigades	One at Tiflis, one at Erivan.
2 Reserve Infantry Brigades	One at Stavropol, one at Temir Khan Shura.
33rd Infantry Division	Kutais.
33rd Artillery Brigade	Kutais.
Caucasian Reserve Artillery Brigade	Vladikavkaz.
Kuban Plastun Brigade of Cossacks	Temir Khan Shura.

Artillery.

<i>Strength.</i>	<i>Stations.</i>
1 Cossack Artillery Division	Armavir
2 Brigades Artillery	One at Tiflis, one at Temir Khan Shura.
2 Mountain Artillery Divisions.	One at Kars, one at Erivan.
1 Kuban Cossack Horse Artillery Brigade	Ekaterinodar.
Caspian Flotilla	Baku.

Ammunition columns,	}	Tiflis, Baku, Batoum, Erivan, etc.
Engineers, Fortress		
troops and Frontier		
Guards		

In addition to the above there are 18 cavalry regiments and a horse battery. The principal garrisons are:—

<i>Stations.</i>	<i>Peace Strength.</i>	<i>War Strength.</i>
Batoum	7,000	18,000
Baku	5,000	11,500
Erivan	5,000	6,000
Kars	7,500	16,500
Kutais	6,500	12,000
Sarikamish	4,000	8,500
Temir Khan Shura	2,500	6,000
Tiflis	11,000	20,000
Vladikavkaz	4,000	8,500

The total Caucasian Army maintained in peace amounts to about 120,000 men, expanding to about 290,000 on mobilization, and consists of about 107 battalions of infantry, 95 squadrons of cavalry, 47 batteries of artillery and 11 engineer companies.

The Siberian Army consists of 3 Siberian Army Corps and one Composite Army Corps.

Siberian Army.

<i>Corps.</i>	<i>Head-quarters.</i>
1st Siberian Army Corps	Nikolsk-Ussurisk.
2nd Siberian Army Corps	Chita (with one division at Harbin).
3rd Siberian Army Corps	Irkutsk.
Composite Army Corps	Harbin.

There are in addition some other troops stationed in Siberia not in corps formation. The principal garrisons are:—

<i>Stations.</i>	<i>Peace Strength.</i>	<i>War Strength.</i>
Irkutsk	8,000	9,500
Khabarovsk	11,000	16,000
Krasnoyarsk	8,000	9,500
Harbin	26,000	31,000
Nikolsk-Ussurisk	18,000	20,000
Verkhny-Udinsk	16,000	22,000
Vladivostock	48,000	49,000

The total Siberian Army in peace-time amounts to about 240,000 men, expanding to about 350,000 on mobilization.

As regards the question of concentration areas for Russian troops, the oases Panjdeh, Sarakhs, Tejend and Merv are suitable as herein are to be found provisions, water, fuel, forage, cattle and transport animals.

There is a very small superfluous supply of cereals in Turkestan.* It is just possible that the resources of the country might meet the first requirements of a large concentrated army. There are plenty of draught and slaughter animals in the Turkestan and Semirechia regions, the total numbers of these being estimated in 1886 at 1½ million oxen, 1½ million horses, 750,000 camels, 250,000 sheep and about 1½ million goats, pigs and

* In 1891-92, 10,000 quarters of corn and flour were exported by the Central Asian Railway, owing to famine in Russia.

donkeys. The easiest places for Russian troops to be concentrated would probably be Panjdeh (supported by the railway), Kerki (advancing along the Amu Daria from Charjui station) and Termez.

It is very unlikely that Russia would ever attempt an invasion of India until she had constructed the railway extension from Samarkhand to Termez. At present only a carriage road exists.

Commissariat arrangements for troops using Kilif and Termez as concentration areas are made much easier by the shorter and more efficient communications (Charjui-Kilif 180 miles and Samarkhand-Termez 180 miles), as well as by the larger and better cultivated oases of Afghan Turkestan and the steamer service on the river Amu Daria. Troops from the Russian Caucasian Army could be easily transported into Turkestan by the Caspian Flotilla and Central Asian Railway. Black Sea ports (Odessa, Sebastapool and Novorossisk) are connected with Batum by steamer whence trains run to Baku via Tiflis. Steamers connect the railway termini of the Volga (Saratov, Astrakhan, etc.) and the Caspian Sea. The Samara-Orenburg-Tashkent Railway would transport troops from European Russia and Siberia and in the future, when the Tomsk-Semipalatinsk-Chimkent-Tashkent Railway is completed, Turkestan will be able to be reinforced direct from Siberia.

Thus it will be possible to largely utilize the Siberian and Caucasian troops, at the same time

reinforcing them rapidly from European Russia. It is probable that about 200,000 troops from the Siberian and Caucasian Armies would be at once available (140,000 Siberian and 60,000 Caucasian).

Russia conducts her mobilization very rapidly and in the campaign of 1900 the reserve troops of the Amur Military District (Cossack battalions and Sotnias) were mobilized within a month.

It is probable that 300,000 men would be available in Turkestan within a month after the "Declaration of War" and 600,000 within 3 months.

For the past 25 years (since 1885) Russia's position on the Amu Daria has remained the same and her only new acquisition of territory in the Central Asian Regions has been the Pamirs (1893). During this period she has pursued with great energy her Far East (Manchurian) scheme culminating in expansion to the shores of the Yellow Sea at Port Arthur.

Down to the present Russia's designs on India have not been serious; if she decides to make them so, there is little doubt she will press onwards and make the Hindu Kush her boundary line and thence endeavour to incite the frontier tribes against Great Britain. The behaviour of the frontier tribes and the attitude of Afghanistan would be likely to constitute two of the most important factors in an invasion of India.

Russia's permanent garrison at Pamirski Post as well as the frequent crossing by Cossacks (1880 to 1900) of the Chitral-Gilgit regions might easily encourage the natives to believe that Russia would help them in time of need. To counteract Russia's action, it is probable that the Peshawar and Kurram districts would be used by Great Britain as concentration areas, the two direct railways, Rewari-Raewind-Multan-Khushalgarh-Kohat-Kurram and Rawalpindi-Peshawar-Jamrud being utilized for the purpose. These concentration areas are connected with two other very important concentration areas Pishin and Quetta, by the railway Peshawar-Attock-Darya Khan-Sukhur-Pishin, a line which is covered by the Indus.

The Russian Krenitsin, in his book *Flight of the Russian Eagle on India*, after discussing the many difficulties of the different routes, sums up briefly Russia's probable action, in case of an invasion of India being undertaken by her, as follows :

"I am not so much in favour of the Herat-Kandahar-Quetta route on account of its nearness to the coast, giving the British an opportunity of making flank attacks.* This route is of course the easiest, there being no natural obstacles except the Suleimans until the Indus is reached. The shortest route is the Ferghand-Chitral route, being only about 360 miles. The Samarkhand-Bamian-Kabul-Peshawar route is about 600 miles.

* Captain Novitsky of the Russian General Staff, who explored Central Asia in 1898, said. "No one doubts in India that Russia will choose this route."

I consider the Ferghand-Chitral or Gilgit (Ferghana route) and the Kandahar-Quetta or Ghazni routes the most important from a strategic point of view owing to their flanking advantages.

The Russian forces for a campaign against India should be divided into 3 distinct armies, making 3 distinct lines of advance, viz. :

- (1) The Caspian Army (Right Flank).
- (2) The Turkestan Army (Central).
- (3) The Ferghana Army (Left Flank).

The Caspian Army will have the principal role to play and should consequently be considerably larger than either of the other two armies. The Ferghana Army will be the smallest as it will not be likely to meet many British troops in Kashmir. The Caspian Army will move by the railway from Krasnovodsk (on the Caspian Sea) to Askabad, Merv and Kushk. Thence, moving onwards, it will have to gain possession of Herat, Kandahar and Ghazni. The Turkestan Army will move by the Samara-Orenburg-Tashkent-Samarkhand-Termez Railway (when completed to Termez) and, crossing the Bamian Pass, advance onwards and seize Kabul. The Ferghana Army will also move by the Samara-Orenburg-Tashkent Railway on Chitral, marching by the Dora Pass. As soon as the above-mentioned places have been captured by the different armies, the combined advance on India will commence.

The Caspian Army will leave a strong garrison at Kandahar and the Turkestan Army will leave a garrison at Kabul which garrisons will have to guard the Bolan and Khyber Passes respectively. These two armies will then move on the Indus by the Gomal and Kurram Passes so as to arrive there simultaneously. Meanwhile the Ferghana Army will move from Chitral to the Upper Indus, cross it, and, occupying the left flank, endeavour to engage the attention of the troops defending the river so as to make it easier for the Caspian and Turkestan armies to cross. On the arrival of all the 3 armies on the left bank of the river, Lahore will be made the base of concentration. The further course of the campaign will depend on whether Great Britain will risk a great action in the Punjab or will, by methodical retirements, draw us further into the interior of India. If the latter, we should follow them no further than Delhi, and occupying this ancient Mogul capital, await the future trend of events."

The routes, with their difficulties, to be followed in the above three lines of advance, have been fully treated in Chapter V.

It will be seen that Krenitsin does not agree with Holdich as regards the practicability of the Ferghana route, but considers it quite within the pale of possibility. In this he is undoubtedly right, as the attitude of the frontier tribes, especially in the vicinity of Chitral, assuredly constitutes the

weakest point in the defence of our Indian frontiers. Krenitsin also considers that the vital issues of the campaign will be decided at the Hindu Kush and the Indus. The above plan of campaign is only a brief sketch of probable action, for it must not be imagined that Great Britain would remain idle while Russia conducted such offensive operations. A seizure of Herat alone, on the part of Russia (which is possible at any time) would probably be answered, on our part, by the immediate seizure of Kabul and Kandahar.

I shall now examine how the new Anglo-Russian Agreement is likely to effect the *status quo* in Central Asia. This Agreement, which has, up to date, not yet been ratified by the Ameer of Afghanistan, is regarded by the majority of the British Public as a guarantee for the safety of India from invasion on the part of Russia and also as an excuse for proposing a reduction in the garrison of British Troops stationed in India.

It has even been the cause of seriously considering the question (many times before mooted) of connecting our Indian railways from Quetta via Kandahar with the Russian railways and Europe so as to enormously decrease the time taken to reach India from Europe.

The Anglo-Russian Agreement * is divided into 3 distinct parts, each containing 5 articles and referring to Afghanistan, Tibet and Persia respectively.

* Signed at St. Petersburg on the 31st August 1907 and ratifications exchanged at St. Petersburg on the 23rd September 1907.

The full text was published officially in St. Petersburg on Tuesday, the 24th September, 1907, and appeared in the London papers on the following day, via. St. Petersburg, thus anticipating the elaborate statement prepared at Downing Street for publication by one day.

As demonstrating Russia's eagerness to have the provisions made public at once it may be stated, in addition to the above, that the text of the treaty reached Kabul first from the Governor-General of Russian Turkestan and not from Calcutta. The five articles referring to Afghanistan are as follows :—

THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN AGREEMENT—A. AFGHANISTAN.

Article I.

His Britannic-Majesty's Government declare that they have no intention of changing the political status of Afghanistan.

His Britannic-Majesty's Government further engage to exercise their influence in Afghanistan only in a pacific sense and they will not themselves take nor encourage Afghanistan to take any measures threatening Russia.

The Russian Government, on their part, declare that they recognize Afghanistan as outside the sphere of Russian influence and they engage that all their political relations with Afghanistan shall be conducted through the intermediary of His Britannic-Majesty's Government ; they further engage not to send any agents into Afghanistan.

Article II.

The Government of his Britannic-Majesty, having declared, in the treaty signed at Kabul on the 21st March 1905, that they recognize the Agreement and the engagements concluded with the late Ameer Abdur Rahman and that they have no intention of interfering in the internal government of Afghan territory, Great Britain engages neither to annex nor to occupy, in contravention of that Treaty, any portion of Afghanistan nor to interfere in the internal administration of the country provided that the Ameer fulfils the engagements already contracted by him with His Britannic-Majesty's Government under the above-mentioned Treaty.

Article III.

The Russian and Afghan authorities, specially designated for the purpose on the frontier or in the frontier provinces, may establish direct relations with each other for the settlement of local questions of non-political character.

Article IV.

His Britannic-Majesty's Government and the Russian Government affirm their adherence to the principle of equality of commercial opportunity in Afghanistan and they agree that any facilities which may have been or shall be hereafter obtained for British and British-Indian trade and traders shall be equally enjoyed by Russian trade and traders. Should the progress of trade establish the necessity for Commercial Agents, the two Governments will

agree as to what measures shall be taken, due regard, of course, being had to the Ameer's sovereign rights.

Article V.

The present arrangements will only come into force when His Britannic-Majesty's Government shall have notified to the Russian Government the consent of the Ameer to the terms stipulated above.

Before discussing the above-mentioned articles of the New Anglo-Russian Treaty of 1907 it may be as well to mention the foundations upon which our policy towards the Ameer of Afghanistan has hitherto rested.

In the correspondence that passed between the late Abdur Rahman and Sir Lepel Griffin, prior to his recognition as Ameer of Afghanistan by the Afghan Sirdars at Kabul, the following proposal was submitted, bearing the date of the 14th June, 1880.

"Since the British Government admit no right of interference by foreign Powers in Afghanistan and since both Russia and Persia are pledged to abstain from all political interference in Afghan affairs, it is plain that the Kabul ruler can have no political relations with any foreign Power except the English; and if any such foreign Power should attempt to interfere in Afghanistan, and if such interference should lead to unprovoked aggression on the Kabul ruler, then the British Government would be prepared to aid him, if necessary, to repel it, provided that he follows the advice of the British Government in regard to his external relations."

In a reply dated the 22nd June, 1880, Abdur Rahman gave his assent and the conditions were therefore confirmed by Sir Lepel Griffin on behalf of the Marquis of Ripon (then Viceroy of India) on the 20th July, 1880.

The conditions were so faithfully observed by the Ameer Abdur Rahman that in June 1883 the Viceroy of India informed the ruler of Kabul that an annual subsidy of 12 lakhs of rupees would be placed at his disposal for the defence of his kingdom and state expenses.

Under the Durand Agreement of 1893 this subsidy was increased to 18 lakhs, the payment of which was, by the Dane Convention, renewed in favour of Habibullah, the present Ameer.

By the agreement of 1880 Afghanistan had thus become a buffer zone between the dominions of Russia and Great Britain in Central Asia. Under successive British ministries the objections of the Indian Military authorities have been respected until the perpetual isolation of Afghanistan has become a fixed idea in the consideration of measures for the defence of the north-west frontier of India. All this time (30 years) it has been understood that no power could be given right of intercourse with Afghanistan.

Even so recently as the spring of 1900 the dominions of the Ameer became the cause of an exchange of diplomatic notes between the late Lord Salisbury and the late Count Mouraviev, when, in a

communication dated the 6th February, 1900, Monsieur de Staal informed the Foreign Office that the Russian Government proposed that direct relations should be established between Russia and Afghanistan with regard to frontier matters, but that such relations should have no political character as the Russian Government intended to maintain their former engagements and would continue to consider Afghanistan outside the sphere of Russian influence.

The attitude of Great Britain to this request was plainly indicated when late Lord Salisbury replied that, having regard to the understanding by which Afghanistan is outside the sphere of Russian influence—

“.....It would be impossible for the British Government to take into consideration any change in existing arrangements or to frame proposals to be brought before the Ameer without more precise explanation with regard to the method which the Russian Government would desire to see adopted for the exchange of such communications between the frontier officials, the limitations to be placed on them and the means of ensuring that those limitations would be observed ...”

Although no reply was returned at the moment, a violent agitation was started in the Russian Press for liberty of direct communication with Afghanistan and the right of diplomatic representation at Kabul.

The Russian Government did not abandon its resolve and considerable attention was aroused when the Ameer of Afghanistan, on the 5th September 1902, read in public Darbar a letter of extreme cordiality from the Russian Government, containing the following :

".....In the opinion of the Russian Government, the time has now come for closer commercial relationship between Afghanistan and Russia. The Afghans have nothing to fear from Russian aggression since the friendliness existing between England and Russia would be endangered if further annexations were made by the Government of the Czar in the direction of Badakshan and Wakhan. This fact in itself becomes a permanent guarantee of peace. Under these circumstances it is an act of folly to continue the attitude of suspicion and concealed hostility that now exists between the Afghan and Russian commanders of frontier posts. The Russian Government therefore invites the Ameer to throw open to Russian caravans the trade routes between Kushk and Herat and Kushk and Kabul. The Russian Government, in return, will allow Afghan traders to enter freely and traverse, without restriction, Russian territory. The matter has already been laid before the British Government, but this letter is addressed personally to the Ameer of Afghanistan, because a favorable answer from the Afghan Government would greatly strengthen the Russian case.."

These Russian proceedings not unnaturally gave rise to questions in Parliament and Lord George

Hamilton thereupon announced for the first time, on the 21st October 1902, the receipt of the Russian proposal which had been transmitted by the Russian Embassy to the Foreign Office nearly three years before. A few weeks later, on the 14th January 1903, Lord George Hamilton's statement elicited the following communique from St. Petersburg:—

“As regards Russia's relations with Afghanistan, it is necessary to declare that Russia addressed no request of any sort to the British Cabinet, but simply notified to it her desire and purpose to enter into direct relations with Afghanistan in the future.”

It is perhaps difficult to understand the reasons which brought about such an emphatic denial from the Russian Government, but the facts are of interest at the present moment and may be said to bear directly on the new treaty since that which was refused by a Conservative Cabinet in 1900 has been conceded by a Liberal Government in 1907, with the addition that, while Russia in 1900 only referred to a right of communication in respect of frontier matters, she has now been granted, under certain circumstances, the privilege of actual representation at Kabul. Moreover, so far as Russia is concerned, the articles establish no principle in respect to Afghanistan that has not appeared afresh in each successive renewal of the Declaration since Prince Gortchakoff in 1868-9 first assured Lord Clarendon that the Russian Government regarded Afghanistan as beyond Russia's sphere of influence.

It is true that the temporary collapse of Russia in the Far East does not permit liberties to be taken with our position in the Middle East to which the upshot of the Russo-Japanese campaign brings a comparatively long peace.

It should not be forgotten that the conquests and occupations of most countries have begun by commercial relations. Commerce is simply "the thin end of the wedge" and politics and commerce are no less interwoven in Central Asia than elsewhere. Russian commercial enterprise became the lever for the establishment of the Czar's authority over Manchuria. It will, moreover, be exceedingly difficult to draw the necessary distinctions required by Articles III and IV of the Convention.

It is possible for those having no knowledge of the conditions under which trade exists in Afghanistan to believe, from the wording of Article IV that British trade enjoys considerable commercial advantages within the Ameer's dominions. This is not at all the case, although recently, by constant representation, the Ameer Habibullah has been induced to remit a few duties and to lower the transit charges on caravans passing through Afghanistan en route to the markets of Russian Turkestan. Unfortunately for Indian commerce, in addition to the heavy charges levied by the Ameer's officials, it has to compete with the bounties granted to Russian traders by the Russian Government. The flow of Russian trade into Afghanistan from

the Trans-Oxus region is by no means small ; in 1902 it was about £450,000 worth and probably now exceeds half a million sterling in value. Russian trade is of course artificially stimulated by a rebate on goods purchased in Russian territory being given to the Afghan traders.

Thus Article IV of the Agreement will still further militate against British-Indian trade with Afghanistan. It is plain that, at least in the clauses of the Agreement referring to Afghanistan, we have given Russia all her desires without receiving from her any advantages whatsoever in return except that she has now signed a treaty where she only gave assurances in the past.

Prefaced by the statement that the Governments of Great Britain and Russia recognize the suzerain rights of China in Tibet and that Great Britain, by reason of her geographical position, has a special interest in the maintenance of the *status quo* in the external relations of Tibet, the five articles in the Anglo-Russian Agreement referring to Tibet are as follows :—

THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN AGREEMENT—B. TIBET.

Article I.

The two High Contracting Parties engage to respect the territorial integrity of Tibet and to abstain from all interference in its internal administration.

Article II.

In conformity with the admitted principle of the suzerainty of China over Tibet, Great Britain

and Russia engage not to enter into negotiations with Tibet except through the intermediary of the Chinese Government. This engagement does not exclude the direct relations between British commercial agents and the Tibetan authorities provided in Article V of the Convention between Great Britain and Tibet of the 7th September, 1904, and confirmed by the Convention between Great Britain and China of the 27th April, 1906; nor does it modify the engagements entered into by Great Britain and China in Article I of the said Convention of 1906.

It is clearly understood that Buddhists, subjects of Great Britain or of Russia, may enter into direct relations on strictly religious matters with the Dalai Lama and the other representatives of Buddhism in Tibet; the Governments of Great Britain and Russia engage, as far as they are concerned, not to allow those relations to infringe the stipulations of the present arrangement.

Article III.

The British and Russian Governments respectively engage not to send representatives to Lhasa.

Article IV.

The two High Contracting Parties engage neither to seek nor to obtain, whether for themselves or their subjects, any concessions for railways, roads, telegraphs and mines or other rights in Tibet.

(Re)

(Re)

Article V.

The two Governments agree that no part of the revenues of Tibet, whether in kind or cash, shall be pledged or assigned to Great Britain or Russia or to any of their subjects.

Thus it will be seen at a glance that the *status quo ante* was infinitely more advantageous to Great Britain as regards Tibet.

British interests in Tibet at the present time, as in Afghanistan, are in no need of any diplomatic adjustment, and while it is desirable that Russia should not interfere in Tibet, there are so many Russian Declarations on this subject that further assurances were unnecessary.*

In considering the Tibetan clauses of the Agreement it is clear that although Great Britain and Russia now agree to treat with Tibet only through the Chinese Government, it is only seven years ago that Lord Lansdowne telegraphed on the 18th February, 1903, to Sir Charles Scott, our ambassador at St. Petersburg, that "We had found it was no use dealing with Tibet through China owing to the dilatory methods of the Chinese Government and the slenderness of their influence over Tibet."

Referring to the Tibetan clauses, Mr. Angus Hamilton says :—

"While Lord Lansdowne's despatch establishes in principle the direct contradiction of the course

* Except that it is undoubtedly advantageous to Great Britain, on this head, that Russia has at last committed herself to an agreement on the subject.

now adopted by Sir Edward Grey, this *volte face* is not the most important feature of Article II. Interesting as, of course, it is, it is eclipsed by the liberty of movement which is conceded, by the last paragraph of Article II, to the Buddhist subjects of Russia in Tibet, always provided that their relations with the Dalai Lama are confined to strictly religious matters! In point of fact this clause requires to be considered in conjunction with Article III in which Russia undertakes to send no representatives to Lhasa, for, although, within the last few years, many agents of the Russian Government have passed between the Tibetan capital and St. Petersburg, these persons have never been officially accredited to the service of the Czar."

Thus the value of Article II lies in the right of direct communication with Lhasa which it secures to Russia.

It may be remembered that one of the causes of the Younghusband Mission to Lhasa was to re-adjust the situation created there by the pernicious activity of Dorjjeff. In the short space of time that has elapsed since this Mission returned from Tibet, considerable development has taken place in Indo-Tibetan trade. It is to be feared that, by the terms of Article IV of the Tibetan section of the Agreement, Indian trade, particularly prominent along the Simla-Shipki caravan route as well as at Gartok, the new western mart, will now be suppressed.

In a special Annex to the Tibetan Treaty of 1907 we re-affirm our intention of retiring from the

Chumba Valley when compliance with the terms of the Declaration of the 7th September, 1904, has taken place.

The likelihood of a return to the troubles of six years ago in Tibet is certain to seriously damage our prestige there, whereas the good done by the Younghusband Mission has been turned to insignificance by the new Agreement.

While there can be no question that the Government of India should be permitted to exercise unfettered control over an irresponsible state lying within the shadow of her own frontier, Russia has sought the principle of commercial equality in an area 1,200 miles distant from her own frontiers in order (presumably) that Great Britain should be said to have recognized the intervening areas as within Russian control. As far as Great Britain is concerned, the *status quo ante* was infinitely more advantageous as regards Tibet than the position brought about by the recent Agreement. An exchange of views upon the conflict of Russian and British interests in Persia was, of course, very necessary and required diplomatic readjustment.

It is, of course, very probable that, in our eagerness to make a convention, Russia forced our hand with regard to Tibet and Afghanistan, whilst in part conceding our demands in Persia.

It is only in the five Persian Articles of the Anglo-Russian Convention that we have reaped any

material advantages from the New Agreement, though the moral advantages of the Agreement with regard to Afghanistan and Tibet cannot be gainsayed.

The five Articles referring to Persia in the Convention are as follows:—

THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN AGREEMENT—C. PERSIA.

Article I.

Great Britain engages not to seek for herself, and not to support in favour of British subjects, or in favour of the subjects of third Powers, any concessions of a political or commercial nature—such as concessions for railways, banks, telegraphs, roads, transport, insurance, etc.—, beyond a line starting from Kasr-i-Shirin, passing through Ispahan, Yezd, Kakhk, and ending at a point on the Persian frontier at the intersection of the Russian and Afghan frontiers, and not to oppose, directly or indirectly, demands for similar concessions in this region which are supported by the Russian Government. It is understood that the above-mentioned places are included in the region in which Great Britain engages not to seek the concessions referred to.

Article II.

Russia, on her part, engages not to seek for herself and not to support, in favor of Russian subjects, or in favour of the subjects of third Powers, any concessions of a political or commercial nature—such as concessions for railways, banks, telegraphs, roads, transport, insurance, etc.—, beyond a line going from the Afghan frontier by way of Gazik, Birjand,

Kerman, and ending at Bunder Abbas, and not to oppose, directly, or indirectly, demands for similar concessions in this region which are supported by the British Government. It is understood that the above-mentioned places are included in the region in which Russia engages not to seek the concessions referred to.

Article III.

Russia, on her part, engages not oppose, without previous arrangement with Great Britain, the grant of any concessions whatever to British subjects in the regions of Persia situated between the lines mentioned in Articles I and II.

Great Britain undertakes a similar engagement as regards the grant of concessions to Russian subjects in the same regions of Persia.

All concessions existing at present in the regions indicated in Articles I and II are maintained.

Article IV.

It is understood that the revenues of all the Persian customs, with the exception of those of Farsistan and of the Persian Gulf, revenues guaranteeing the amortization and the interest of the loans concluded by the Government of the Shah with the "Banque d'Escompte et des Prêts de Perse" up to the date of the signature of the present Agreement, shall be devoted to the same purpose as in the past.

It is equally understood that the revenues of the Persian customs of Farsistan and of the Persian Gulf, as well as those of the fisheries on the Persian shore of the Caspian Sea and those of the Posts and Telegraphs, shall be devoted, as in the past, to the service of the loans concluded by the Government of the Shah with the Imperial Bank of Persia up to the date of the signature of the present Agreement.

Article V.

In the event of irregularities occurring in the amortization or the payment of the interest of the Persian loans concluded with the "Banque d'Es-compte et des Prêts de Perse" and with the Imperial Bank of Persia up to the date of the signature of the present Agreement, and in the event of the necessity arising for Russia to establish control over the sources of revenue guaranteeing the regular service of the loans concluded with the first-named bank, and situated in the region mentioned in Article II of the present Agreement, or for Great Britain to establish control over the sources of revenue guaranteeing the regular service of the loans concluded with the second-named bank, and situated in the region mentioned in Article I of the present Agreement, the British and Russian Governments undertake to enter beforehand into a friendly exchange of ideas with a view to determine, in agreement with each other, the measures of control in question and to avoid all interference which would not be in conformity with the principles governing the present Agreement.

Although the Question of the Persian Gulf has not been specifically included in the Agreement, the maintenance of British supremacy has been acknowledged.*

In Persia the partition seems, at first sight, to favour Russia, but against this apparent advantage in the size and extent of her area of influence must be set 4 important points as follows :

(1) The larger sphere of influence gained by Russia was already hers in practice.

(2) Our sphere will protect the left or weak flank of the North-West Frontier of India.

(3) Our Position in the Persian Gulf is strengthened.

(4) Russia abandons any attempt at securing an outlet into the Indian Ocean.

Treating the Agreement *in toto* it would appear that the only concession we have obtained from Russia, as regards the Articles concerning Afghanistan and Tibet, is that we have at last persuaded Russia to put her assurances, many times previously given and broken, on paper in treaty form, whereas in these spheres of influence we have conceded Russia enormous advantages. In Persia, as above stated, the balance is more even and the Seistan portion of the Agreement is a distinct and

* Sir Edward Grey's letter to Sir A. Nicholson, requesting him to draw attention to the previous declarations of British policy and to re-affirm generally the previous statements as to British interests in the Persian Gulf and the importance of maintaining them.

very great advantage to Great Britain. Roughly speaking Persia is divided into three parts—a Russian sphere, an English sphere and a neutral sphere.

Russia takes Northern Persia including Teheran, Ispahan and Yezd as her sphere of influence. Her zone lies within a line drawn from Kasri-Shirin on the Turco-Persian frontier, passing through Ispahan and Yezd and thence northwards to the Afghan boundary which it touches to the north-west of Herat at Zulfikar (the point where the Persian, Afghanistan and Russian frontiers meet).

We take as our zone the triangle which is enclosed by a line drawn from the Afghan boundary near Gazik, extending south-west through Birjand and Kerman to Bunder Abbas at the head of the Persian Gulf. Great Britain, as will be seen, undertakes to seek for no political or commercial concessions within the Russian sphere whilst Russia makes a similar pledge regarding the English zone.

The remainder of Persia constitutes a neutral region, open to the subjects of either of the contracting parties.

There is also a sort of Appendix to the Convention in the shape of a letter from Sir Edward Grey to the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg relating to the Persian Gulf. There is no positive declaration in the Convention safeguarding our interests in the

Persian Gulf, though our privileged position there is confirmed by the inclusion of Bunder Abbas in the British zone. But the Foreign Minister says that the Russian Government, during the negotiations, explicitly stated that they did not deny the special interests of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf—a statement of which His Majesty's ministers have formally taken note. These interests, as Sir Edward says, are the results of British action in those waters for more than a hundred years.

The importance of the Convention, as far as Great Britain is concerned, lies solely in its bearing upon India. Our interests in Persia, Tibet and Afghanistan are practically entirely Indian interests. The triangle between Bunder Abbas at the entrance to the Persian Gulf to a point where the frontiers of Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Persia meet (Koh-i-Malik Siah) is our legitimate hinterland. This triangle is vital to what in recent years has come to be regarded as the chief danger to India from Russia, namely that Russian influence would reach downwards through Seistan and Persian Baluchistan to the frontiers of India and that a strategic railway on the lines of the Manchurian railway in the Far East skirting the Afghan frontier and continued to a terminus on the Indian Ocean might practically turn the flank of our great defensive position on the north-west frontier of India. Nowhere in Persia has the activity of Russian agents been more aggressive than in Seistan and nowhere were the possibilities of acute conflict more serious. To have obtained

from Russia a solemn pledge that, not only will she abstain from interference in those regions, which alone could have opened up to her the approaches to India and the Indian Ocean through Persia, but also that she recognizes their paramount importance for us must unanimously be admitted to have been worth a great sacrifice of interests in other respects. Of vital importance to us is the maintenance of Afghanistan as a buffer state between the Russian and British Dominions in Central Asia. For over a century, Russia, though willing, from time to time to give us friendly assurances, persistently declined to bind herself by any treaty engagement. We have now obtained from her what we have never been able to obtain before, namely a solemn recognition on her part that Afghanistan lies outside her sphere of influence, and a promise to conduct all political relations with the Afghans exclusively through the British Government.

Abroad the Convention has been hailed with applause. France is delighted and Russia well pleased, whilst Germany states she has no fault to find with it. It is feared in Berlin that, though the treaty is of purely Asiatic purport, nevertheless, as a result of the relaxation of the tension on the Indian frontier, Great Britain's position will be greatly strengthened in Europe.

In Paris it is confidently expected that, now that Russia has arranged matters with Japan in the Far East and settled her differences with Great Britain in the Middle East (Central Asia), she will

concentrate her foreign policy almost exclusively upon the Near East and evoke a three-cornered contest between herself, Turkey and Germany.

In any case the new Anglo-Russian Convention could never be made an excuse for joining our Indian railways with those of Russia in Central Asia. Indeed, were we to join our Indian railways with the Russian ones across Afghanistan, the latter State would cease to be a "buffer" and we should have to enormously increase our Indian garrisons.

Of criticisms on the new Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 there have been many.

Mr. Angus Hamilton's opinion, which is a considerably weighty one in Central Asian matters, is summed up in his own words as follows:—

"We have compromised our position in Tibet whilst confirming that of Russia's in Chinese Turkestan (Kashgar). Under these circumstances—and always remembering that while we have surrendered many important advantages in Tibet, Afghanistan and Persia, Russia has nowhere conceded anything—one may well ask wherein lies the value of the new treaty? Saving the issues arising from the so-called Russia-Persian Railway Convention, nothing of any very great importance required either settlement or discussion and, since the situation established by Russia's monopoly of railway construction in Persia has not been modified, it is impossible to regard the new treaty without misgiving."

Lord Curzon, who holds views very similar to the above, scathingly indicted the Agreement in the House of Lords in his "Maiden Speech."

A slashing attack was directed against it in the "Nineteenth Century and After" from the pen of Professor Vambery, the venerable traveller and scholar, now a resident in Buda-Pesth.

Professor Vambery says bluntly :

"The stipulations do more harm than good to the British interests and, in the form in which it came out, the Agreement had much better be non-existent, as far as Great Britain is concerned. England has abdicated her position in the west and south-west of Persia and it is naive and childish to suppose that the retention of a sphere of interest in the south-eastern corner will ward off any further attack against England's position in the Gulf. British prestige will suffer in Persia and I can place no reliance on Russia's undertaking not to extend her sphere of influence beyond Khorassan. As to Afghanistan, the principal result is that England will have opened the Afghan market to Russian trade whilst, in my opinion, the bargain about Tibet is quite incomprehensible."

Mr. Balfour's opinion is that, in view of the concessions in Tibet, Persia and Afghanistan, the Agreement cannot be regarded as a great diplomatic success, however desirous we might be of being on friendly relations with Russia.

Sir Edward Grey, of course, strenuously defends the Convention, emphasising the fact that, had we insisted on taking a sphere of influence and commerce in Persia corresponding to facts, the exclusive rights on the other side to a line that would have been commercially more favourable than the present one, but which would have been open to the greatest objections, would have placed Teheran within an exclusively Russian sphere and would have opened to Russia the route to Mesopotamia*.

Sir Edward Grey goes on to say that it would have been difficult to then include Seistan, in the British sphere or, if included, Russia would have been left within striking distance of it, which objection was absolutely fatal to such a partition.

The Foreign Secretary continued that the first point to be considered throughout the negotiations was, not the commercial, but the strategic importance of the Agreement, and the key to the strategic position was Seistan and that the advance of Russian railways and Russian influence into Seistan would have opened a new door for advance into India

* It is well known that Germany imputes to England a scheme to create a British domain in Babylonia (the region along the lower Euphrates and Tigris rivers) with British capital and Hindu emigrants, which is to be connected with India by a railway from Kandahar through Seistan and S. Persia and with Egypt by another line from Suez through Arabia. Such a railway would seriously diminish the value of the Baghdad line and make of the Persian Gulf an English lake. The railway to Egypt through Arabia would constitute a second link between India and the reserves of strength in Egypt. Already we see a shortening being effected in the journey to India via Alexandria and Suez. The importance of this line will be seen when we consider that Alexandria is 100 miles nearer to the Italian coast than Port Said. In a short time the last link of the Nile Railway will be open to Port Soudan (late Suakim) and, with this railway opened, there will be a straight run from Alexandria to Port Soudan, thus saving passengers half of the voyage through the Red Sea as well as considerable time.

and would have burdened India with increased military expenditure. He further denied the sacrifice of any great commercial prospects which we had any chance of realizing. In conclusion he dwelt on the importance of the Convention as regards the general relations between Russia and Great Britain compared with which he designated the sacrifices insignificant.*

It is a remarkable fact that the fatuous chorus of jubilation with which the London Press received the Agreement has been succeeded by a series of severe and scathing criticisms by men like Vambery, Curzon, Angus Hamilton and Balfour, who really understand the affairs of the Middle East (Central Asia).

Every Agreement or Convention is bound to be open to severe criticism, but, in the case of the recent Anglo-Russian Agreement, it seems hard to realize that we could not have obtained better terms from Russia in her temporarily crushed condition instead of making enormous sacrifices to gain her friendship and goodwill. Russia has gained over us a great diplomatic victory (just as she did over the Japanese in the negotiations preceding the treaty of Portsmouth).

In the future it seems almost assured, from the present trend of events, that Russia will again endeavour to reach the Yellow Sea. Her aims in Kashgaria (Chinese Turkestan), her proposed Amur Railway, her doubling of the Siberian

* Undoubtedly very great.

railway and other smaller schemes point to the fact that she intends, reorganized and freshly constituted, to again give battle to the New Great Rising Power that has sprung up in the Far East. In addition to this, it is possible also that Russia may again enter the lists against Turkey, capture the stronghold of Constantinople and come into possession of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles.*

The recent Anglo-Russian Agreement leads us to consider why it is that Russia and Great Britain have been at variance for so many years. In very many ways an offensive and defensive alliance between Russia, France and Great Britain would be quite a possible thing and would ensure the peace of the world. To an alliance with France there are no objections as French and British interests do not clash anywhere. As regards Russia, the recent Anglo-Russian Agreement has dealt with most of the "bones of contention" and thus paved the way for such an alliance.

Until the year 1854 we had been on good terms with Russia from time immemorial.

At that period we took it into our heads that our duty and interests were concerned in averting the inevitable decay of the Ottoman Empire and in precluding Russia from gaining any advantage from it. This was of course due to our nervousness about India. The Crimean War was the result, and that war has left behind it fifty years of ill will

* We should not, of course, allow Russia to gain access to the Mediterranean Sea.

and mutual suspicion, the cost of which is, to both countries, beyond calculation.

The expansion of Russia in Central Asia has been, to a great extent, inevitable, and nobody could have better reasons than ourselves for recognizing this. Moreover, by resisting the advancement of Russia in the Near East, we have contributed to her forward movement in Asia. Yet we have chosen, from first to last, to regard this expansion as a menace to ourselves and as prompted solely by the desire to strike at us in India.

On their side, no doubt, the Russians, whether or not they have seriously contemplated an attack on India at some future date, have assuredly recognized that, as this is our most vulnerable point, by getting within striking distance of it, they have a hold on us and a means of influencing our diplomacy which would tend to their advantage in other quarters of the globe.

Thus the two countries have gone on year after year, we distrustful and seeking every occasion to thwart Russian policy, they resentful and watching for an opportunity of getting even with us.

Whatever else may be thought about the Treaty that has just been concluded, it may, at any rate, be hailed with satisfaction as a serious attempt by the statesmen of both countries to put an end to this state of things, and whether it does or not must depend on Russia's future policy.

A single treaty of this stamp is worth many Peace Conferences at The Hague.

The chief causes of war between civilized nations are national rivalry and jealousies generating bad blood between them and mutual suspicions of one another's motives and intentions.

During the last century, and particularly during the last fifty years, there has been less and less disposition to quarrel over sudden and temporary conflicts of international rights. Many differences of opinion, within living memory, that would formerly have called for war to balance political equilibrium, have been adjusted by peaceful negotiations and the timely mediation of third parties, solely because the Governments and peoples immediately concerned had no previous intention of flying at one another's throats.

What is necessary, therefore, to ensure peace amongst the Great Powers is to anticipate the growth of conflicting interests and ambitions, which, if allowed to develop, create distrust and rivalry, and to foresee possible causes of quarrel and to remove the same whilst tempers are cool on both sides.

This is what has been done in the foreign relations of our own Government by recent International Agreements—notably those with France and the United States—and the process has now been carried a long step farther by the Treaty with Russia.

It is to be hoped that the New Anglo-Russian Convention may be the commencement of a solid and lasting friendship between these two great countries.

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